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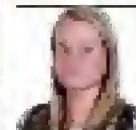
PUPPET PASSION

Juanita Dawn lives out her dreams 12 steps from her home,
metroNEWS

Jurors deliberate

GARLAND TRIAL

'Decision trees' given to jury



Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Jurors in the Douglas Garland triple-murder trial were handed "decision trees" by Justice David Gates Wednesday before heading into the jury room to begin their deliberations that would lead to a verdict.

Douglas Garland, 57, is accused of first-degree murder in the 2014 deaths of Alvin and Kathy Liknes and their five-year-old grandson, Nathan O'Brien, who had stayed for an impromptu sleepover the night of June 29, 2014. Gates told the jurors the decision trees asked them a number of questions that would lead them to a guilty or not guilty verdict of first-degree murder, second-degree murder or manslaughter. He said the

decision trees for Alvin and Kathy Liknes were the same, but the one for five-year-old Nathan O'Brien differed slightly.

"Nathan's presence was in all likelihood a surprise," said Gates.

Gates said in order to find Garland guilty of first-degree murder in the death of the five-year-old the Crown would have had to prove to them that Nathan was "unlawfully confined" (mentally, physically or was injured under Garland's control) before being killed.

The other way for a first-degree murder conviction to be reached for Nathan is that the Crown proved to the jurors that once Garland discovered Nathan's presence he incorporated him into his overall plan. Gates said if jurors believe the Crown proved Nathan was alive at his grandparents' home and taken to the farm to be killed would also result in a first-degree conviction, whereas if they believe he was killed at the Likneses' home it could be a second-degree conviction.



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CALGARY



Lot 11-21: Village Home
The Swing 'Contemporary', 1,410 Sq.Ft. \$279,990 2 bed, 2.5 bath

Included Upgrades: Pot lights in kitchen and over main tub, upgraded kitchen cabinets and paint colour, upgraded quartz in ensuite and kitchen, upgraded carpet on upper floor and stairs, upgraded faucet in powder room, subway tile backsplash in kitchen.



Lot 12-60: Double-Car Garage Home,
The Opal 'Colonial', 2,310 Sq.Ft. \$599,990 3 bed, 2.5 bath

Included Upgrades: 9' main with 8' doors, bath oasis, alternate kitchen, rec room ready pkg, sous kitchen package, cold water fridge line, TV ready wall, maple posts and spindles, glass shower enclosure, pot light in main bath enclosure, walkout lot backing onto the environmental reserve.

AIRDRIE



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Lot 1-42: Single-Car Garage Home,
The Astoria 'Craftsman', 1,459 Sq.Ft. \$384,990 3 bed, 2.5 bath

Included Upgrades: Walkout, 9' main with 8' doors, alternate kitchen, gas fireplace, rec room ready pkg, pot light over main and ensuite tub, oak railings, under cabinet lighting, full depth cabinets, kitchen pot lights, sous kitchen pkg, upgraded carpet and hardwood, quartz in kitchen and ensuite.



Lot 5-23: Double-Car Garage Home,
The Riedel 'Craftsman', 2,158 Sq.Ft. \$542,990 3 bed, 2.5 bath

Included Upgrades: Walkout, bath oasis, rec room ready pkg, ensuite glass shower, 8' doors, under cabinet lighting, full depth fridge cabinet, full height cabinets, oak railings and mantel, pot light over tub, double sink and quartz in ensuite, upgraded carpet, hardwood and paint, mosaic kitchen backsplash.

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Lot 15-73: Manor Townhome
The Birch 'Tudor', 1,525 Sq.Ft. \$355,990 3 bed, 2.5 bath

Included Upgrades: Rec room ready pkg, bath oasis, kitchen pot lights, under cabinet lighting, full depth upgraded cabinet, pot light over bathtubs, upgraded quartz in kitchen and ensuite, upgraded floor tiles, wall tiles and bathroom backsplash, laminate, upgraded glass kitchen backsplash, upgraded carpet and underlay.



Lot 15-69: Manor Townhome
The Aspen End 'Prairie', 1,698 Sq.Ft. \$374,990 3 bed, 2.5 bath

Included Upgrades: Lookout basement, bath oasis, rec room ready pkg, pot lights in kitchen, fridge cold water line, TV ready wall in the great room, railing in lieu of kneewall, pot light in main bath tub, sous kitchen package, knockdown ceilings.

SAFETY BOARD

Probe may take a year

The investigation into what happened aboard a Mount Royal University flight is in its infancy.

With an ongoing investigation that could take a year, and no black box aboard, answers on the fatal crash will remain a mystery for some time.

On Monday, police attended a serious crash just after 6 p.m. One of Mount Royal University's twin-engine TECNAM P2006T flights went down in the Waiparous area; two flight instructors were on board.

There were no survivors.

Wednesday, as the families of Jeff Bird and Reyn Johnson mourned, investigators were removing the wreckage from the crash site and bringing it to Edmonton.

Transportation Safety Board officials said the plane isn't required to have a black box.

John McKenna, president of the Air Transportation Association of Canada said investigations of this type typically wrap up in a year.

"It's a tight-knit community, and there are very few accidents in Canada," McKenna said. "When they happen, we're always incredibly overwhelmed by them."

Julie Leroux, a TSB spokeswoman said currently there are three phases to the investigation.

When reporters asked about the second plane in the air at the time of the crash, and whether there were students aboard, Peter Davison, director of the MRU emergency operations centre wouldn't comment. HELEN PIKE / METRO CALGARY

Community, family mourn pilots killed in plane crash

IN MEMORIAM

Reyn Johnson, Jeffrey Bird remembered as dedicated



Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Although questions about the fatal crash of a Mount Royal University flight continue, family statements make one thing clear: the experienced pilots were meticulous, loving family men proud to take to the skies as professionals.

No task was too small for Reyn Johnson, better known as Reyn, according to a statement issued by the flight instructor's family.

Another instructor from Mount Royal University's (MRU) aviation program, Jeffrey Bird, died with Johnson when the twin-engine TECNAM plane they were piloting crashed near Cochrane on Monday night.

Students and faculty at MRU were invited to sign a guest-book in memoriam, set up at the Bissett School of Business.

Outside, a modest memorial of a few bouquets had collected at the school's campus.

"When you think about Reyn, two things come to mind: He was loving and caring and

he was also meticulous and professional," the Johnson family said in a statement Wednesday.

He is survived by his wife Brenda, his children Maryse and Lucas, and three grandchildren.

"No task was too small to deserve his care and attention. As a pilot, he took pride in detail, even insisting on ironing his own shirts, not just to look professional, but because he thought that a job worth doing was worth doing right," the statement continued.

Both pilots were experienced instructors.

Bob Blakey, Bird's uncle, described him as a devoted family man.

"I don't believe Jeff regarded anything as just a chore. He loved being with his children. I have this permanent image of him at family gatherings, carrying the smaller child in one arm while holding the other's little hand," Blakey said.

The Canadian Forces Member leaves behind his wife, Carly, and his children.

The school stated that they're helping families with memorial services, and when details are firmed up, they will share information with the community.

A memorial to celebrate Bird's life has been arranged by the family on Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Bella Concert Hall Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts.



This floral memorial sat at the Mount Royal University campus Wednesday. HELEN PIKE / METRO




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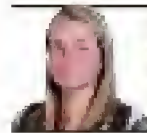
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Judge counsels jury on their job

GARLAND TRIAL

Justice Gates preps jurors for verdict deliberations



Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Justice David Gates, presiding over the Douglas Garland triple-murder case, spent Wednesday morning instructing jurors on how to interpret the law and how to best use the evidence before them when making their decision.

Douglas Garland, 57, is accused of first-degree murder in the 2014 deaths of Alvin and Kathy Liknes and their five-year-old grandson, Nathan O'Brien who had stayed for an impromptu sleepover the night of June 29, 2014.

Gates began by telling

the jurors that he was instructing them in an effort to help them reach a decision — not to make a decision for them.

"You're the sole judges of the evidence and the facts arising from that evidence," he said. "Public opinion, media reports and comments by others have no role in your decision."

Gates told the jurors that "sympathy can have no place" in their deliberations, and that jurors are to rely on the testimony from the 48 witnesses and 89 exhibits presented to them over the last five weeks of the trial.

"It is also your opinion of the evidence that counts, not the Crown, defence or me ... you are the judges of the facts," he said.

"Do not speculate. Do not permit yourself to guess or make up theories," he said.

Gates told the jurors the presumption of innocence is vital to our democracy and

legal process, and that they must come to their decision "beyond reasonable doubt."

"Proof of probably or likely doubt is not enough. If that is where you land you must find him not guilty," said the judge.

Provided to the jurors by Justice Gates was what he called "decision trees," indicating they had questions that must be answered to lead them to a verdict of either guilty or not guilty of: first-degree murder, second-degree murder or manslaughter.

Gates also urged the jurors to use their "collective common sense" when analyzing the evidence and testimonies from witnesses—and that they can accept as much or as little of the evidence and testimonies as they see fit.

"Your duty is to consider all the evidence you accept ... and determine if guilt has been established by the Crown beyond reasonable doubt."



Justice David Gates is presiding over the Douglas Garland triple-murder case. CONTRIBUTED



It is also your opinion of the evidence that counts, not the Crown, defence or me.

Justice David Gates

COLLISION

Police investigate hit-and-run



Elizabeth Cameron
For Metro | Calgary

A truck blew through a stop sign in the city's northeast and struck several vehicles before driving off, on Tuesday night at about 9 p.m.

It happened at the intersection of Northmount Drive and Thorneycroft Drive NW.

The Calgary Police Service (CPS) is investigating the hit and run, which left two people with minor injuries.

"The injuries were non-life-threatening," said police spokesperson Corwin Odland.

The victims were in a nearby taxi, one of four vehicles hit.

Odland said CPS won't be releasing any more information about the incident, pending further investigation.

"We do have suspects, but we haven't made any arrests or laid any charges at this point," Odland said.

Anyone with information is asked to call the CPS non-emergency line at 40-266-1234.

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City, police flying high with new applications for drones

TECHNOLOGY

Not just for hobbyists, UAVs can help keep city safe



Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Drones. Hot on the Christmas list this year for hobbyists, photographers and tech nerds, the powerful toys aren't just for weekend flights.

The City of Calgary and police are both flying to new heights with the small, but useful machines, where they're finding exciting new applications in their everyday jobs.

Imagine a fatal car crash. As police tape off the area to reconstruct what led to the carnage, their crash investigation vehicles are each equipped with a drone. They deploy it and see a birds-eye angle.

"Getting an aerial view of a collision scene, we can see things we can't see at ground level — tire marks, paths travelled by vehicles," said Calgary Police Service Traffic Section Sgt. Colin Foster.

He said last year they deployed a UAV for a collision and saw a painted square on the pavement the three investigators had missed.

Of course, police have the luxury of using HAWCS, but Foster points out the helicopter has higher priorities, is costly to operate and often booked up.

So far, officers have mostly used their crafts in the traffic unit, but Foster noted they've successfully deployed their flying machine for a missing per-



Colin Foster and his drone 'Starbuck' in Calgary on Monday. ELIZABETH CAMERON/FOR METRO

Drones can do certain jobs a lot quicker, and more accurately.
Bruce Cullen

sons case, where it was used in a park.

"The biggest thing is, in order for us to fly we have to be able to control the area," Foster said.

Both police and the city have versions of Special Flight Operations certificates, which allow them to legally operate their

crafts. The police certificate has fewer limitations than the city's because they have the power to secure areas and ensure civilians aren't put in harm's way.

Foster is quick to note that a large chunk of Calgary is actually under the airport's "control zone" — translated as a no-fly

zone for most other operators.

But it's not as simple as going up, flying and landing.

Bruce Cullen, general manager of corporate analytics and innovation with the city, explains they have to log each of their flights and notify nearby airports before take-off, reporting back to Transportation Canada in order to keep their certificates in good standing.

His department within the city has a more sophisticated drone, which is used for sur-

veying and data collection, so it's equipped with numerous sensors — including one that can read infrared light.

He said for the city, this machine is delivering value.

"Drones can do certain types of jobs a lot quicker, and more accurately," Cullen said. "We're using it to provide images, location and condition data of assets, landfill, gravel pile volumes and other information to different departments."

They aren't just taking to the skies. For Cullen, the city used to send two people out in a rowboat to collect samples. But now those employees can safely steer an unmanned boat to collect samples without once leaving the shore.

It's a small fleet, but as the city finds new ways to use them, its drone army is slowly growing. Cullen said they may be looking into another survey drone — which isn't exactly cheap, at approximately \$20,000 a pop.

In the parks department, Todd Reichardt said they are continuously exploring new ways to use their two drones.

Flying can help them take high-quality images of the park's inventory — giving them a view of today's plant growth and types for the historical archives. And it's also good at helping the city keep track of invasive weeds.

He said if the city had drones in the days or years before Snowtember, they would have a much more accurate view of how much tree cover was truly lost.

"That would be the type of thing we deploy these drones for, especially for a disaster," Reichardt said. "We would want to see the effects right away."

+ SKY RULES

Can I fly my drone?

Turns out you can't just buy an unmanned aerial vehicle and launch into flight, gathering cool visuals of Calgary's downtown.

There's actually quite a few rules for hobbyists to understand and obey before they consider taking to the skies.

Nearly three-quarters of the city is a no-fly zone because of its proximity to the Springbank and Calgary International Airport.

That means regardless of size and weight, you can't fly in the area — and if you do you could face a large fine.

The city also has two bylaws that dictate drones aren't allowed over parks or roads. If caught you could face a \$100 fine or court appearance.

You can't fly at night, or when it's foggy out, and it has to remain in sight while in the air.

The City of Calgary can't fly their drone at night, but police can, since they have the power to secure areas and ensure civilians aren't put in harm's way.

So, when can you fly? The only advice from the city is to get permission from a landowner (including the city) before taking to the skies.

HELEN PIKE/METRO

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CPS officers who were affected by workplace bullying and harassment are giving praise to Calgary Police Commission chairman Brian Thiessen for his tough questions to the force's top brass. ELIZABETH CAMERON / FOR METRO

Commission heads praised by ex-police

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Women who fought bullying issues applaud CPC leaders



Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Former female Calgary police officers who have been the spokeswomen for workplace bullying and harassment issues within the police force said they're relying on Calgary Police Commission leadership to hold CPS executives' feet to the fire.

Marlene Hope and Jen Ward — both former CPS officers (Ward publicly quit at the January CPC meeting

citing her issues with bullying and harassment and a lack of support from executive) — said they appreciate how CPC chairman Brian Thiessen and vice-chairwoman Lisa Silver continuously “ask the tough questions” of the CPS executive about these issues.

“It appears that those two understand the dynamics that are involved and aren't just taking them at their word—they're asking the hard questions to make sure the service tells them

how they plan to carry things out,” said Hope.

Ward said she and other officers in similar positions as her knew and trusted Coun. Diane Colley-Urquhart. Ward said she's hopeful, following Colley-Urquhart's abrupt decision to step down from the CPC, that they can build that kind of trust with Thiessen and Silver.

Thiessen said he and Silver, along with the other commissioners, will continue to ask the “tough questions” because they take their role and civilian oversight of the police force very seriously. “We think if the public is asking these questions we owe them because we have a seat at the table with the CPS executive there to ask them pointed questions,” he said. “We've done that in that past and will continue to do it.”



They're asking the hard questions to make sure the service tells them how they plan to carry things out

Marlene Hope on Brian Thiessen and Lisa Silver

Silver said in her questions she aims to bring an outside perspective to the force, the perspective of the public.

“We have to be that outside little voice that says, ‘think of it this way.’ Asking those hard questions to keep them understanding that there is a reflection of our society going on here and we all have to work together,” she said. Hope said they're thankful to see CPC leadership stepping up in this way.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Underserved Calgary NW to get express buses



Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Residents of newly-developed neighbourhoods pay taxes, but that's not enough to get the city to run a bus through their area.

This is the case for northwest Calgary neighbourhoods such as Nolan Hill — a part of town Calgary Transit told Metro

in 2016 is underserved.

But according to Coun. Joe Magliocca, these communities can expect to catch an express bus as soon as March to nearby train stations. This means residents who currently circle CTrain stations for parking before riding downtown can leave their cars in the drive and walk to a bus stop before transferring to a train.

“I'm working really hard,” said Magliocca. “I'm getting

a couple of express buses on peak hours to go directly to LRT stations, either Crowfoot or Dalhousie.”

Northwest resident Venugopal Kesavan is frustrated with the lack of transit in his community. He's lived in Nolan Hill for two years, and has seen friends in newer communities than his own have bus access.

“They're saying there's not enough funds to build the transit service,” Kesavan said.

“We're not getting the service that we're paying for.”

Last year, transit was only serving 60 per cent of communities with a “base transit service” and at the time, it looked as though the transit system wouldn't be able to up routes in new communities until 2018. The community has more than 500 residents, but that may not be enough to squeeze a bus stop on every corner.



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The Alberta government wants to take every precaution to prevent wildfires like the one that hit Fort McMurray last year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta preparing for wildfire season

DISASTERS

Hopes higher fines will help bolster prevention

Alberta hopes higher fines and a voluntary fire prevention program will help protect communities from wildfires this year.

Following the destructive wildfire in Fort McMurray last May, the government strengthened penalties for people who abandon campfires or burn during fire bans.

The legislation, which went into effect in December, also makes it easier for the government to restrict use of off-highway vehicles when fire conditions are hazardous.

Forestry Minister Oneil Carlier said he hopes more communities will apply for Firesmart funding to clear brush and trees around populated areas.

Carlier said the Firesmart program will remain voluntary, but he believes more municipalities will apply for funding this year.

"It's topical. They have seen what happened in Fort McMurray last year. I am hoping for some really good uptake this year."

The minister declined to say whether the government will earmark more money for Firesmart in its March budget. The program helps communities develop a plan to reduce vegetation, including removing volatile trees such as spruce, and building fire breaks.

A guidebook for municipalities, municipal districts and counties, First Nations and Metis settlements warns that "as more and more Albertans move into communities located in and around forested areas, many of these

communities face a high to extreme wildfire risk."

Alberta is making other changes to be ready for another potentially early fire season.

Carlier said the government has signed 120-day contracts with private air-tanker companies this season. The contract period had been reduced to 90 days early last year. That period

was later extended because of the Fort McMurray fire.

Fire permits will also be required for any burning other than campfires in forested areas when the wildfire season begins March 1.

Last year there were 1,338 wildfires in Alberta that burned more than 611,000 hectares.

The government estimates that more than 60 per cent of those fires were started by people. Lightning is the other major cause.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

60%

Percentage of the 1,338 wildfires in Alberta last year that the government estimates were started by people. Lightning is the other major cause.

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Actress Patricia Cerra said it took a lot of mental preparation to play the character, an unnamed girl in the sexual tourism trade.
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DRAMA

Underage sex, power struggle explored at Sage Theatre



Underage sexual tourism ... Now that I've got your attention, you can probably guess we're about to talk about a heavy topic — one that the minds at Sage Theatre aren't afraid to tackle.

Their newest production,

Soliciting Temptation, presents us with an unnamed, middle-aged white man, who meets an unnamed, young (too young) Eastern girl in a dark situation.

When the girl takes control of the situation, and threatens to expose the man as a pedophile and sexual tourist, shifts of power, class and privilege are explored.

"It's not a gentle play. It does toss you around a bit," said director Jason Mehmel.

"Both our characters get woken up from some of their preconceptions, by being forced to listen to the ideas of another person.

"That's also happening to me."

The production has been eye-opening for Mehmel, who said it's made him more aware of his own privilege in life.

Actress Patricia Cerra did some mental heavy lifting to prepare for the role.

Initially she came into the play with her own opinions, as any audience member would upon hearing the topic, but as she read through the pages she found herself judging both characters.

She dug and dived into the grit of the world to discover more about the characters, and herself.

It was the same with actor Mattie Overall. It's not easy trying to push aside preconcep-

tions of a character in that situation and play them as a human being, and not a caricature.

By the play's end, Mehmel hopes to spark a discussion — he doesn't want them to come away with some specific message like an after school special.

"We're not giving them a lecture, or asking them to feel a certain way," he said. "But I do hope as the characters transform, the audience themselves will be slightly transformed, with a difficult, complicated question in their minds."

Soliciting Temptation runs from Feb. 23 to March 4. For more information, visit sagetheatre.com.

CANADIANA

Flag turns 52 — and it has a link to Calgary



Although the Canadian flag flies from Vancouver Island to St. John's, the maker of the maple symbol has close ties to Calgary.

George Stanley's red-and-white design was raised for the first time on Feb. 15, 1965. But, years before he was commissioned to create it, he lived

with his family at 1111-7 St. SW — an address now known as the Laurier Lounge.

The restaurant is currently closed for renovations, but Calgary historian Harry Sanders said he distinctly remembers taking his family for lunch there on the 50th annual Flag Day two years ago.

"Being a Canadian, we live more or less at peace," he said.

"So we don't have to go for exuberant nationalism, but every once and a while there's

something that stirs one's heart about being Canadian — and being in George Stanley's boyhood home on that day did that for me."

Born in 1907, Stanley went on to attend Connaught School, which still stands today, and Central Collegiate Institute, which was the forerunner to Central Memorial High School.

In an essay Stanley wrote and was published in the Chinook County Historical Soci-

ety's 1987 anthology, he describes being tasked to read "Maple Leaf Forever," for a class at Connaught School.

"Imagine..." said Sanders.

"The guy who designed the maple leaf flag was sitting here in Calgary, in a building that hundreds, if not thousands, of commuters pass by on 12 Avenue every day. That's where little George Stanley had to read Maple Leaf Forever.

"There's something special about that."

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Doctor shopping and pill popping

Health officials say real-time information is needed to stop prescription fraud. Alberta is one of the only places in Canada that tracks opioid use through a provincewide network.

ELIZABETH CAMERON FOR METRO

It's known on the street as 'doctor shopping.'

A recent report from the province revealed almost 40 per cent of individuals who fatally overdosed last year were prescribed an opioid from three or more different health-care providers within their last year of life.

"These may be perfectly legitimate interactions, because it's tracked over an entire year," said Dr. Karen Grimsrud, chief medical officer for Alberta Health.

"However, there may be too many people prescribing opioids to one individual and not being aware of that."

Alberta's Pharmaceutical Information Network (PIN) allows pharmacies, doctors, and other health facilities to access an electronic record of a patient's current and previous prescriptions.

"How rapidly that information becomes available is not optimal, that's one piece we're looking at," Dr. Grimsrud said.

New dispense records are batch-uploaded to the PIN from the pharmacy's patient record every evening, and if there's a system issue, it takes longer.

"We have to get it to real-time," said Greg Eberhart, registrar at the Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP).



Chelsea Turnham has been taking methadone five years to treat her heroin addiction. ELIZABETH CAMERON/FOR METRO

He said the ACP works with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) to identify high-risk patients.

"Pharmacists are trained and expected to not only evaluate patients, but evalu-

ate the validity and authenticity of the prescription. If they have reason to believe a prescription has been forged, they will contact the prescriber," Eberhart said.

The PIN also flags possible dosage

issues and duplicates. If prescription fraud is suspected, the CPSA is also able to intervene.

"When we get that information, we send letters to the doctors involved," said Kelly Eby, director of communications

for the CPSA. "In some circumstances, someone might have been away or it was completely legitimate for them to see another physician for the same drug."

She said Alberta is one of the only provinces to track opioid use.

BY THE NUMBERS

37%

Per cent of individuals who died of a drug overdose in 2016 who were prescribed an opioid by three or more health-care providers the year prior to death.

23%

Per cent of individuals who died of a drug overdose in 2016 went to three or more pharmacies for an opioid prescription in the year before their death.

SOURCE: ALBERTA HEALTH, OPIOIDS AND SUBSTANCES OF MISUSE REPORT (FEB. 2017)

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Lauren Charbonneau, 12, takes a bite out of a birthday cupcake at Crave Cookies and Cupcakes on Wednesday for the launch of Give More Birthdays. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Kids' generosity inspires fundraiser

CHARITY

Children can now donate in lieu of having birthday gift



Jennifer Friesen
For Metro

Calgary kids have banded together to give birthday gifts that will last a lifetime. Year after year, the staff of Kids Cancer Care would see children marching up to their office, armed with envelopes of their own birthday money to donate to the cause.

Now, the non-profit organization is recognizing those acts of selflessness by launching their new initiative, Give More Birthdays. "We're formalizing something that they already began," said Christine McIver, founder and CEO of Kids Cancer Care. "Seeing those kids coming in with their birthday money has always been such a special time

— it's hard to give away your birthday money. It's kids helping kids." Flanked by four of the children who have already donated their birthday gifts to charity, McIver launched Give More Birthdays on Wednesday morning at Crave Cookies and Cupcakes in Kensington.

Lauren Charbonneau was among the budding philanthropists, having turned her last two birthdays into full-fledged fundraising events. Charbonneau was diagnosed with kidney cancer at three years old, and spent the following year of her life facing surgeries, radiation and chemotherapy. Now, the 12-year-old is healthy, treatment-free and paying it forward.

Last year alone she raised \$1,700 for Kids Cancer Care and the Alberta Children's Hospital oncology unit by selling homemade cardboard boxes packed with candy. "After everything

that the Alberta Children's Hospital and Kids Cancer Care has done for me, I decided that I've got to do something," she said. "There are other kids in Alberta that have cancer, and imagine what they would do without those treatments?"



It's hard to give away your birthday money. It's kids helping kids.

Christine McIver

According to Kids Cancer Care, 160 children are diagnosed with cancer every year. Through research, education and family outreach, the organization has a vision to "cure every child and care for every family."

In celebration of Canada's 150th birthday, Kids Cancer Care is hoping to have 150 birthdays registered this year. It's an ambitious goal, but Charbonneau says she'll count for one on her 13th birthday in September. "No matter what, it makes me feel happy to do it," she said. "Because it means that more kids are going to live." For more information visit kidscancercare.ab.ca.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

District Labour Council says police decision is out of line



Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

The city's District Labour Council isn't pleased with the Calgary Police Commission after news of reprimanding their own.

In a statement released by the council's president Wednesday, the Calgary District Labour Council calls out the CPC ranks for a misguided approach and calls for

them to look inside themselves and re-establish the confidence in police that's been lost.

"We disagree with the commission's position in publicly chastising Colley-Urquhart," said Alexander Shevalier, president, Calgary & District Labour Council. "The Calgary police service appears to have an internal problem in how they deal with harassment and other human resources issues."

On Monday, the Calgary Police Commission issued a statement indicating they had informally dealt with complaints about Diane Colley-Urquhart's public response to workplace harassment issues within the Calgary Police Service.

On Tuesday, the councillor formally stepped down from her role at the CPC. She's been on the commission for 10 years and was planning to leave this year.

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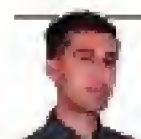
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Turning fantasy into reality

THEATRE

Couple makes props and puppets for productions



Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Five minutes west of Calgary, inside an unassuming red home with a handcrafted sign out front, Juanita Dawn and Pat Rozitis spend their days turning fantasy to reality.

Their little workshop, dubbed The Long Grass Studio & Workshop, creates props and puppets. Rozitis's half of the workshop is all wood-working, glass blowing and heavy-duty power tools. It's fun contrast to his wife's half — which is rows on rows of different wires, fab-

rics, moulds and half-finished puppets just begging to spring to life before your eyes.

There are notes and drawings over the desks and the walls. In the corner, a glass heater moans and bellows while the ventilation heaves in delight as bodies move through the space.

It's really cool.

Through raising children and working their own careers, the two never lost sight of their passion — and created the workshop next to their home a few years ago, to make props for other productions.

Now Dawn is debuting her own show, Broken Sugar Bowl,

at the Calgary Festival of Animated Objects.

Involving multiple artists and different mediums, the show presents three poems from award-win-

ning poet Mildred Tremblay (who, in a wild coincidence, was raised in the same town as Dawn). The poems have

“I wanted her to move from a fairly normal look — to really mad.”

Juanita Dawn



Juanita Dawn and Pat Rozitis have a chat with the Old Woman at the Long Grass Studio & Workshop. AARON CHATHA / METRO

big, bold feminist themes and in Dawn's interpretation of them, all three will feature the character of Old Woman.

Creating Old Woman

Dawn's speciality is making

puppets, so let's talk how she created her star puppet.

First, it starts with a few sketches on paper, and then Dawn begins work on creating the head. She makes a clay mould, in two pieces,

that create a hollow head. This is really important, as Dawn wanted the eyebrows to move, and the head needed room for some cool, technical wizardry.

"I wanted her to move from

a fairly normal look — to really mad. Just a little movement changes her to a really angry person," Dawn laughed.

The torso is built out of a wood frame, like a marionette, and then covered with a clay cast. The inside is kept hollow, so the puppet doesn't require a huge feat of strength to lift.

The arms and legs are sanded down until their right shape. The hands need to be a bit stronger, so they're actually cast with a silicone-like product called Dragon Skin, which feels as cool as it sounds.

Finally, the hair is put into place with a process called needle felting. There are tiny holes in the back of the Old Woman's head, and the hair is placed one tuft at a time — in a long, but impressive looking process.

At the time of the interview, Old Woman was very naked (which will be a plot point in the play), but Metro was assured she would get some clothes by showtime.

Broken Sugar Bowl runs March 18 and 19. Visit puppetfestival.ca

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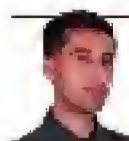


Bryton Udy and Annika Odegard first met as kids. CONTRIBUTED

Old friends, new success

MUSIC

Calgary-raised Country duo hits charts, is back in town



Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

It's already a guitar-twangingly great year for Calgary country music duo Leaving Thomas.

Musicians Annika Odegard and Bryton Udy broke the Billboard top 50 country music charts this year with their single Waiting Kind of Girl. They've been signed by MDM Recordings, wrapped up a songwriting tour in Nashville and are now gearing up for a performance back home in Calgary.

Odegard and Udy attribute their success to their long history together. They actually first met when Odegard was 11 and Udy was nine, as part of the children's choir in a production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

They reconnected 10 years

later at the Calgary Stampede talent search.

"We're standing on stage together getting our picture taken and I asked if she remembered me," said Udy.

"He had become a man!" interjected Odegard.

Udy laughed and finished, "So we connected then, and ended up by chance playing at another event."

The chance meetings piled up and eventually the two started writing and performing together under the moniker Leaving Thomas.

"You have to kind of be the right amount of best friends," Odegard explained.

"You have to be so open and honest with the person you're writing with, that it's hard not to feel like you've become best friends."

They take a focused, storytelling approach to their music. Their goal was always to enjoy themselves, not specifically to write a radio hit, but their success has been a lovely surprise.

Leaving Thomas will be performing at Knoxville's in Calgary on Feb. 23, in support of the Big Hearted Mavericks Foundation.

PC LEADERSHIP RACE

No-Kenney forces get complaint reviewed

The battle is back on to force former Conservative MP Jason Kenney out of the Alberta Progressive Conservative leadership race.

Darcy Schumann, a member of the party's board of directors, exercised his right Wednesday to revisit a complaint filed by party member Jeffrey Rath against Kenney.

Rath has argued that Kenney's promise to dissolve the PCs and join forces with the rival Wildrose party violates

party rules not to harm the PCs or their brand.

He also said that Kenney has denigrated the party in public comments and that those actions, along with his promise to dissolve the party if he wins, should prompt his expulsion from the race.

The party's leadership election committee unanimously dismissed Rath's complaint last weekend.

Schumann said in an email Wednesday that the commit-

tee could rule on only half the complaint, relating to a breach of leadership race rules. The committee couldn't rule on allegations relating to the party's constitution and damage to the PC brand, he wrote.

Schumann, the party's Calgary vice-president, has called the emergency meeting for Feb. 24. He could not be reached immediately for comment.

"I think it underlines how we viewed this all along," Rath said, "that it's a very serious

complaint."

Schumann's email said he will ask Rath to make his arguments in person on Feb. 24. Rath said he will attend.

Kenney, in a statement, called Rath's complaint and Schumann's review an undemocratic attempt to silence the thousands of party members he says have already voted to support pro-Kenney delegates at the leadership convention in Calgary on March 18.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Liberals backing Islamophobia bill

PARLIAMENT

Motion calls for action against 'climate of hate and fear'

The Liberal government is coming out strongly in favour of a motion to condemn Islamophobia and all other forms of racism and religious discrimination.

Heritage Minister Melanie Joly said passing the non-binding motion would send a strong message about discrimination against the Muslim community, particularly in light of the recent deadly attack on a mosque in Quebec City.

"We overwhelmingly reject the politics of racism and exclusion," Joly said Wednesday outside the House of Commons.

She was surrounded by Liberal MPs — including several cabinet ministers — as a strong show of support, and a signal of her confidence that despite

this being a free vote, there would not be anyone in the Liberal caucus who is expected to stand against it.

"Our government is committed to building a diverse, inclusive and welcoming society that promotes respect for all, regardless of faith, race or ethnicity."

The private member's motion, put forward by Liberal MP Iqra Khalid, calls on the government to "recognize the need to quell the increasing public climate of hate and fear" and condemn Islamophobia, as well as all other kinds of "systemic racism and religious discrimination."

The Commons heritage committee would also be asked to study the issue and develop a strategy to

tackle it.

A number of Conservative MPs have called for the motion to be more inclusive, warning it risks stifling freedom of expression by preventing criticism of elements of Islam or Muslim culture, such as the face-covering veil known as the niqab.

Both Joly and Khalid insisted the motion would not touch on freedom of expression.

Khalid, a Muslim, said her own experience with Islamophobia over the past few weeks has convinced her to press ahead. THE CANADIAN PRESS

I, along with some of my colleagues, have been the recipients of hateful comments. This strengthens my resolve to continue to combat this issue.

MP Iqra Khalid



Member of Parliament Iqra Khalid is congratulated by colleagues as she makes an announcement about an anti-Islamophobia motion on Parliament Hill on Wednesday. PATRICK DOYLE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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'Hot tea' lawsuit against Starbucks thrown out



David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

Remember the 1994 "hot coffee" lawsuit that saw a U.S. jury order McDonald's to pay a coffee-burn victim \$2.86 million in damages?

Turns out Starbucks could have had its own "hot tea" moment in Canada — except in the Sechelt, British Columbia case, a provincial court judge tossed out a local woman's lawsuit that had steeped for 17 months.

On Feb. 1, judge Steven Merrick dismissed a tea-burn lawsuit filed by Shayla Williams, who received second- and third-degree burns to her "left thigh and gluteal area," she testified, after "the lid popped off" a cup of tea she'd ordered from a Starbucks drive-through — served at 86C, the company testified.

"Understandably, Ms. Williams was in significant pain," Merrick ruled. "Despite my sympathy for the claimant who clearly suffered extremely painful burns, it is my judgment that she has not proven her

case against the defendant."

A Starbucks witness testified that outlets heat their water to 93C, and hold and serve it at 86C. Like in the McDonald's lawsuit, both companies argued their water temperatures were industry standard and that customers expect their hot beverages to be hot.

But Williams "believed that she was burned because the tea was so hot that it distorted the cup," Merrick wrote in his Feb. 1 ruling. "causing the lid to become loose and fall off the cup."

VEGREVILLE

Seemingly small decision affects town in a big way

A study commissioned by a town in eastern Alberta suggests the closure of a federal immigration processing centre would be economically devastating.

Vegreville would suffer a permanent drop in population, lower property values and higher unemployment if the Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Case Processing Centre moves

to Edmonton, according to the report.

The report suggests Vegreville could lose up to 420 people, or 7.3 per cent of the population, and the town believes about 130 students would be lost from local schools.

It could also lead to a 30 per cent decrease in home prices.

The centre opened in Vegre-

ville in 1994 and has been one of the town's largest employers for over 20 years.

"The government's decision to close the CPC means Vegreville will be older, smaller and poorer. This is exactly the opposite of what the government promised to do for rural Canada in the last election," Mayor Myron Hayduk said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Storms take second swipe at East Coast

WEATHER

Weary people are braced for yet another wallop of snow

The snow just kept falling on Paradise.

"It started yesterday morning, slowed down last night and then picked up again and

now we're all snowed in again!" Darren Byrne said Wednesday from Paradise, a small community outside St. John's which he estimated got about 60 cm of snow.

"Yes my love, there's probably eight feet of snow in the driveway in front of my car!"

The blizzard that walloped the Maritimes Monday and Tuesday took a second bruising swipe at eastern Newfoundland on Wednesday, dumping

mounds of snow and unleashing strong winds on a region already weary from a series of powerful storms.

Meantime, another storm was heading for Atlantic Canada on Thursday, prompting Environment Canada to post storm warnings for much of western Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and southern and eastern New Brunswick. The agency said another 15 to 30 cm could fall.

David Neil, a meteorologist

with Environment Canada, said on Tuesday winds gusted to 110 km/h but had dropped to about 80 km/h in most affected areas.

He said the St. John's area was expected to get more than 60 cm of snow by the time the system moved out later Wednesday, while Gander recorded about 30 cm, raising the snowfall there to almost 100 cm so far this winter.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Mike Blackwood digs out in downtown St. John's, NL Wednesday as blizzards hit the area for the second day. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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JUDICIAL COUNCIL

'Knees together' judge seeks another review

A judge who could lose his job after asking a sexual assault complainant why she couldn't keep her knees together is asking for a judicial review in his case. Justice Robin Camp wants to address the Canadian Judicial Council after the accused, Alexander Wagar, in the original trial was acquitted again in a retrial.

In court documents filed this week, Camp says the council refused his request to speak because he already had the opportunity to address a disciplinary panel and the acquittal didn't change anything.

Camp noted that five council members felt he should be heard.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Protesters gather in Milwaukee, Wisc. to rally against President Donald Trump's policy on immigration. Organizers are telling immigrants to skip class, miss work and not shop Thursday. GETTY

Immigrants in U.S. vow to disappear — for a day

ACTIVISM!

Part of massive cross-country action to show their value

Organizers in cities across the U.S. are telling immigrants to miss class, miss work and not shop on Thursday as a way to show the country how important they are to America's economy and way of life.

"A Day Without Immigrants" actions are planned in cities including Philadelphia, Washington, Boston and Austin, Texas.

The protest comes in response to President Donald Trump and

his 1-month-old administration. The Republican president has pledged to increase deportation of immigrants living in the country illegally, build a wall along the Mexican border, and ban people from certain majority-Muslim countries from coming into the U.S. He also has blamed high unemployment on immigration.

Employers and institutions in some cities were already expressing solidarity Wednesday with immigrant workers.

Washington restaurateur John Andrade said he would close his businesses Thursday, and David Suro, owner of Tequilas Restaurant in Philadelphia and a Mexican immigrant, said he also planned to participate.

The Davis Museum at Welles-

ley College in Massachusetts said it would remove or shroud all artwork created or given by immigrants to the museum through Feb. 21.

In New Mexico, the state with the largest percentage of Hispanic residents in the nation, school officials worried that hundreds of students may stay home on Thursday.

"We respectfully ask all parents to acknowledge that students need to be in class every day to benefit from the education they are guaranteed and to avoid falling behind in school and life," principals with the Albuquerque Public Schools wrote in a letter to parents.

Students who take part in the protest will receive an unexcused

absence, Albuquerque school officials said.

Organizers in Philadelphia said they expect hundreds of workers and families to participate.

"Our goal is to highlight the need for Philadelphia to expand policies that stop criminalizing communities of colour," said Erika Almiron, executive director of Juntos, a non-profit group that works with the Latino immigrant community. "What would happen if massive raids did happen? What would the city look like?"

Almiron said that while community groups have not seen an uptick in immigration raids in the city, residents are concerned about the possibility.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LABOUR

American workers enter a 'dark period'

A review of the U.S. Department of Labor's website revealed that multiple posts about protecting precarious workers, enforcing labour laws, and cracking down on wage theft have vanished.

"If we have been living in an overcast period for working people in the U.S., we are about to enter into a dark, dark period," said California-based workers' rights advocate Carmen Rojas.

There are notable disappearances, including an executive order that lifted the minimum wage of federal contractors to

\$10.10 an hour — a move that provided an estimated 200,000 low-wage workers with a raise. Numerous links to Department of Labor blog posts also appeared to be broken, specifically on issues related to wage theft, enforcement, and employee misclassification — the practice of wrongly classifying workers as independent contractors to avoid legal obligations like paying minimum wage.

All three areas were championed under Obama in an effort to better protect vulnerable workers. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



U.S. President Donald Trump and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shake hands during a joint news conference at the East Room of the White House Wednesday in Washington, DC. GETTY IMAGES

ISRAEL

Trump charts new course for Middle East

President Donald Trump on Wednesday withheld clear support for an independent Palestine and declared he could endorse a one-nation solution to the long and deep dispute between Palestinians and Israel.

The American president, signalling a new era of comity between the U.S. and Israel after rocky relations under President

Barack Obama, said he was more interested in an agreement that leads to peace than in any particular path to get there.

While Trump urged Netanyahu to "hold off" on Jewish settlement construction in territory the Palestinians claim for their future state, he offered unwavering support for Israel.

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Migrants and refugees wave for help from inside a wooden boat 21 miles north of Sabratha, Libya. The chief of the European border and coast guard agency says migrant deaths on the Libya-to-Italy smuggling route have increased to a record level despite ever more rescue vessels trying to prevent mass drownings. EMILIO MORENATTI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Death toll on the rise

MIGRANTS

Smugglers on lawless Libyan coast overload tiny dinghies

Migrant deaths have risen to a record level on the Libya-to-Italy Mediterranean Sea smuggling route, and the increasing number of rescue boats trying to prevent mass drownings there might actually be helping the smugglers, the European Union's border and coast guard chief says.

Frontex executive director Fabrice Leggeri said Wednesday that authorities face a "sad paradox," for as the international community increases its efforts to send more rescue ships close to Libya, more people die as smuggling rings pack ever more people onto tiny dinghies and push them out toward the open sea.

He said the recorded number of migrant drowning deaths on the route in 2016, which might be much less than the true loss of life, stood at 4,579. Leggeri called it "tragic and the reasons are well known: the number of migrants now (arriving) on very small dinghies."

The Frontex report Risk analysis for 2017 said smugglers have grown more bold and reckless, knowing that rescue boats will be right on the edge of Libya's

territorial waters.

"Dangerous crossings on unseaworthy and overloaded vessels were organized with the main purpose of being detected" by military, EU or civilian vessels ready to pluck desperate migrants out of the water if necessary.

"Apparently, all parties involved in (search and rescue) operations in the Central Mediterranean unintentionally help criminals achieve their objectives at minimum cost, strengthen their business model by increasing the chances of success," the report said.

It said migrants and refugees setting off on the dangerous voyage were "aware of and rely on humanitarian assistance to reach the EU."

Leggeri said smugglers along the lawless Libyan coast put an average of about 100 people on a small boat in

2015, then increased that to 160 per boat last year. He said that, together with a decrease in food and survival equipment like life vests, it was a prime reason for the number of casualties.

Compared to the record number of deaths last year, the central Mediterranean route saw 2,869 deaths in 2015 and 3,161 in 2014. There is little sign the surge is abating, even during this winter. There were 228 recorded deaths in January, by far the biggest total for the month in recent years.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Turkey's leaders urged to 'change course'

Europe's top human rights institution on Wednesday urged Turkey's leaders to "urgently change course" and reverse violations of media freedoms and the rule of law, voicing alarm over democracy in the country.

The call comes as Turkey is set to hold a referendum on April 16 about switching to a presidential system — a move critics fear will concentrate too many powers in the hands of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan whom they accuse of increas-

ingly authoritarian behaviour.

In a 25-page report released Wednesday, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, said that Turkey's already worrisome lack of media freedoms and freedom of expression had reached "seriously alarming" levels since the government declared a state of emergency after a failed military coup attempt in July.

The commissioner also expressed concerns over constitutional amendments that will

be voted on in the referendum, saying they "foresee a significant further diminution of the autonomy of the Turkish judiciary vis-a-vis the executive and legislative branches."

Among other issues, Muiznieks criticized Turkey's broad definition of terrorism and terrorist propaganda, which includes statements that do not incite violence, the imprisonment of dozens of journalists, the erosion of the independence of the judiciary, the abundant

use of defamation laws used to silence critics, censorship of the Internet and the use of state resources to favour pro-government media.

"The commissioner urges the Turkish political leaders in the strongest possible terms to change course and start separating what is a terrorist action from criticism and dissent, and to display the responsibility and tolerance expected in a democratic society," the report said.

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Canada, EU hail trade deal

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PM in Europe to address Parliament on Thursday

Lawmakers in Canada and Europe are hailing Wednesday's approval of the Canada-EU free trade deal by the European Parliament as a win for the values of openness in the face of anti-trade movements, including the Donald Trump administration in the United States.

The legislature in Strasbourg, France, approved the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement by a margin of 408-254, with 33 abstentions. The vote clears a major hurdle for the deal that saw its first round of bargaining almost eight years ago and has had to overcome mounting anti-trade populism in Europe.

Canada's Parliament also is expected to ratify the deal in the coming months, which means 90 per cent of it would come into force under provisional application.

That key procedural step allows the deal to take effect without the ratification of the European Union's 28 member countries and numerous regional governments.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sets off on a trip to address the European Parliament. ADRIAN WYLD / THE CANADIAN PRESS

was en route to France to deliver his own pro-trade message in an address Thursday to the European Parliament, a first for a Canadian leader, and to top business leaders a day later in Germany.

On his way into a caucus meeting earlier Wednesday, Trudeau sang the praises of the deal as evidence of the merits of global-

ization.

"I think it's an illustration that when you put forward a progressive trade deal that takes into account the responsibility of governments to create good middle-class jobs, create inclusive growth — not just for a few, but for everyone — (and) that focuses on the middle class, we can move

forward on globalization."

International Trade Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne, who was already in Strasbourg ahead of the vote, called it "the right deal at the right time."

"Good for workers, consumers and a new standard for trade."

EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom took direct aim

at anti-globalization forces in remarks to Parliament.

"With Canada we share the democratic values of tolerance and openness. We co-operate in tackling common challenges such as migration, sustainable development, climate change and terrorism," Malmstrom said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CYBERSECURITY

Yahoo warns its users

Yahoo is warning users of potentially malicious activity on their accounts between 2015 and 2016, the latest development in the internet company's investigation of a mega-breach that exposed 1 billion users' data several years ago.

Yahoo confirmed Wednesday that it was notifying users that their accounts had potentially been compromised but declined to say how many people were affected.

In a statement, Yahoo tied some potential compromises to the "state-sponsored actor" responsible for the theft of private data from more than 1 billion user accounts in 2013 and 2014. The stolen data included email addresses, birth dates and answers to security questions.

The breach raised questions about Yahoo's security and destabilized the company's deal to sell its email service, websites and mobile applications to Verizon Communications.

The malicious activity that was the subject of the warnings revolved around the use of "forged cookies" — strings of data used across the web and can sometimes allow people to access online accounts without re-entering their passwords.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COMMONS COMMITTEE

Media tax change proposals depend on archaic model: Google

Proposals for tax changes aimed at helping Canadian publishers fight for revenues with online news aggregators would result in a punitive "tax on advertisers," executives from Google Canada and Facebook Canada told a Commons committee studying the country's media industry.

That's because tax laws cur-

rently on the books designed to prop up the industry are archaic and simply don't apply to the Internet age, Jason Kee, Google Canada's head of policy and government relations, told the heritage committee Tuesday.

Kee said he had concerns over how such changes would be implemented.

"Long story short, it's es-

“Long story short, it's essentially a tax on Canadian advertisers.”

Jason Kee, Google Canada executive

entially a tax on Canadian advertisers," he said.

A report by former journalist Edward Greenspon, commissioned by the Department of Heritage and unveiled late

last month, called on Ottawa to consider changing tax laws to favour Canadian news publishers in the digital advertising market and use the new revenue stream to establish an

independent, publicly subsidized journalism fund.

The independent think-tank Public Policy Forum recommended that advertising with foreign-owned websites no longer be deductible under the federal Income Tax Act.

The report said that, by extending a 10 per cent withholding tax to commercials and

advertising carried by foreign digital media, the government could create a revenue stream of up to \$400 million annually.

Kee said that assumes a direct relationship between an advertiser and a publisher that doesn't exist in the digital world, but does for traditional media under a policy dating from the 1960s.

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CHANTAL HÉBERT ON SECULAR DRESS CODES



A Montreal philosopher co-authored a report nine years ago that recommended imposing a secular dress code. The mosque shooting now has him regretting that suggestion.

Almost a decade ago, Montreal philosopher Charles Taylor — one of Canada's leading intellectuals — co-chaired over a provincial commission on religious accommodation that recommended, among other measures, that Quebec impose a secular dress code on the province's judges and police forces.

In so doing, he and historian/sociologist Gérard Bouchard inadvertently planted the seeds of Quebec's decade-long fixation on religious vestments in general and the Muslim veil in particular.

Some of those seeds eventually found their way elsewhere in Canada, most notably in the shape of the debate on the place of the niqab at citizenship ceremonies at the time of the last federal election.

The Bouchard-Taylor report was more than 300 pages long and most of its recommendations dealt with measures designed to nurture a pluralistic society. But it was the notion of a government-imposed ban on religious signs that stuck with the public.

The imprimatur of two leading thinkers freed part of Quebec's chattering and political classes to jump on the dress code bandwagon and advocate restrictions on individual religious expression that would have been unthinkable prior to the report.

Taylor and Bouchard prescribed a ban on religious signs for people invested, by virtue of their positions, with coercive powers. In the rhetoric of the Coalition Avenir Québec and the Parti Québécois, that came to mean anyone in a position of authority. And even that term soon lost any semblance of meaning.

In the PQ's defunct secur-

alism charter, a secular dress code would have been imposed on anyone on the public payroll, from clerks to nurses to doctors to child-care workers.

thrown to the many Quebecers who felt their identity was threatened by expressions of religious diversity. The proposal had more to do with marketing than actual values.



After the Quebec mosque attack, Charles Taylor reversed his support for a secular dress code in Quebec. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Neither academic had such blanket restrictions in mind when they wrote their report. On various occasions, both tried to set the record straight.

Now Taylor has gone a step further. In an op-ed piece published in *La Presse* earlier this week, he urged Quebec's political class to put back in the bottle the genie he and Bouchard let out. In hindsight, he wrote, he wishes he had left the bottle uncorked.

Taylor says he never did believe that a prohibition on religious signs, be it on those who sit on the court benches or wear a police uniform, was necessarily in keeping with Quebec's secular character.

In his op-ed, it comes across as little more than a bone

Taylor writes that he thought the recommendation would help a majority of Quebecers buy in to the more positive prescriptions of the report.

The opposite, of course, happened. Even with the best of intentions, opportunism is not a substitute for principles.

Taylor also predicts that should the national assembly ever put the restrictions on religious signs he once advocated into law, the courts would throw them out.

That, too, is a bit of a stunning admission.

Over the past decade, there has not been in Canada a substantial court ruling that would affirm or affirm Taylor's doubts as to the legal

standing of the proposal he is recanting. In other words, if he believes it would probably not survive a charter challenge now, he would have had cause to suspect as much at the time of the writing of the report.

Taylor said it was the attack on a Quebec mosque two weeks ago that prompted his public reversal. In the aftermath of that attack, the parties in the national assembly essentially resumed the debate over religious accommodation where they had left off. Arguing that a majority of Quebecers back the dress code restrictions of the Bouchard-Taylor report, the opposition parties have been pressuring the Liberal government to pass them into law.

Taylor believes that the public goodwill that has resulted from the mosque tragedy will be squandered if Quebec's political class does not switch its focus from debating how far to restrict the rights of religious minorities to the building of more bridges with the Muslim community.

Predictably, since he reversed his position, Taylor has been vilified on social media. Some have called him a Liberal sellout; others accuse him of being a fundamentalist.

It took courage for Taylor to repudiate a notion that has driven Quebec's identity debate for the best part of a decade. Still one cannot help but regret that he did not exhibit that courage nine years ago, at the time of the co-writing of the report that bears his name.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in *Metro* every Thursday.



The choice is hers Rachel Lindsay is the next Bachelorette, the first black lead in the show's history. WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC.

Reality TV gets real



Vicky Mochama
Metro

After 13 seasons of ignoring it, I am now a massive fan of television's longest-running arranged marriage scheme. The Bachelorette. This is because the newest bachelorette is Rachel Lindsay, a black female attorney.

It doesn't even air until May 22 and I can conclusively say it is the best show on television. And not only did ABC announce this during Black History Month, but — it can't be coincidence — the new season also premieres on my birthday. Fate has foretold the greatness of this show.

Even though it's in the rapid confines of The Bachelorette, it is still awesome to see many men vying for a black woman's attention and love. Yet it is telling about the state of the world that the producers, looking for ways to shake up the show, landed on "What if she was a black?"

Like using bad olive oil, it is offensive but not egregious. It suggests there's something incredibly wild and risky about dating a black woman. (I mean, there is, but that is because black women are incredible! Not because we are like feral animals in the outback.)

At the same time: finally.

This show has been on for 12 seasons! Black people have been around for much longer!

Although there have been black contestants on both The Bachelor and Bachelorette, Lindsay included, they've never been the ones doing the choosing. And since the show's inception in 2002, they never got chose either.

Black women who are dating are statistically less likely to be picked. According to

data from OkCupid founder Christian Rudder, men on the website find black women the least desirable group.

In a cover feature for *The Walrus*, Hadiya Roderique experimented with the idea by alternating her OkCupid profile between her actual pictures, pictures of a white woman, and a "whitened" version of herself. As a white woman, she received far more messages than when she presented as herself, a black woman.

This jives with my own dating experience. The first time I quit Tinder was because the messages I received were hyper-sexualized and racialized. The former is part of the appeal of the app to some, but for me the combination just created a digitized version of the racist sexual harassment I experience in real life.

(I am back on again with some rules — e.g. if the other person says something even remotely racial, I hit that unmatch button faster than Usain Bolt sprints.)

For black women, the romantic fairy tale told by popular culture hasn't included us. That is why I will be watching The Bachelorette when Rachel Lindsay finds her Prince Harry.

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Books for bitter times

TAKING ISSUES

Put the phone away and open up to genuinely alternative facts

Marissa Stapley
Torstar News Service

In a world where facts and truth are becoming collateral damage, I've been speaking out even more than usual, and I'm not alone. There's an anger being awakened in all of us.

For me, that means having pointless arguments online with people I went to elementary school with and will probably never see again, and harsh, politically charged arguments with close family members.

None of this has been rewarding, and it certainly hasn't changed anything. But what will?

I realized recently that in order to find that out, I needed to shut down my computer, look away from my phone and turn to the place within which I've always sought knowledge and comfort: books.

Debate

In *I'm Right and You're an Idiot* (New Society, 272 pages, \$19.95) Canadian public relations guru turned author and activist James Hoggan writes: "In debate we assume we have the right answer, whereas dialogue assumes we all have pieces of the answer and can craft a solution together."

"Debate is combative and about winning, while dialogue is collaborative and focuses on exploring the common good. Debaters defend their assumptions and criticize the views of others, whereas in dialogue we reveal assumptions and examine all positions, including our own."

To that end, here's what I've been reading lately to find ways to constructively support what I already value and believe and to open my mind to the beliefs of others. Plus, I needed to find a way to stop shouting so much.

Liberalism

Listen, Liberal (Thomas Frank, Metropolitan Books, 320 pages, \$31.50) takes on the democratic elite. As Canada awakens to how very like the U.S. we may be, questioning liberal values with an eye to both defending them and improving them, as well as truly understanding what it means to be elitist, is an uncomfortable necessity.

Classism

So, what's the opposite of a member of the liberal elite? *Hillbilly Elegy* (J.D. Vance, Harper, 272 pages, \$34.99) has the answer to that. Vance was raised in the Rust Belt by a drug-addicted mother and then in the Appalachians by guardian grandparents who

struggled with alcoholism and violence.

They loved him fiercely. His story puts a face to the white underclass who have become so outspoken in today's political arena. There's a lot to grapple with in a book like this but it's a good place to start when trying to understand what's going on in communities you may not identify with — and it makes it clear that speaking out from within, in any community, is the only way forward.

Religion

Next, I read *Letters to a Young Muslim*, by Omar Saif Ghobash (Picador, 272 pages, \$31). This book is meant as a plea for moderation from an author who has clearly listened deeply and wants to speak the truth, gently and respectfully.

He's also writing to his sons, which ups the ante. No shouting allowed. Those arguing with the most fierceness — on both sides — about immigration bans and extremism may know nothing about what it means to be a Muslim or what Islam is. This is just a starting point, and a fine one at that.

Feminism

Now, on to feminism. I've been a feminist practically since I could speak in full sentences but never before have I felt on one hand so supported and on the other so opposed.

I've read plenty of books that support what I already think, but *Unfinished Business* by Anne Slaghter (Random House, 352 pages, \$32) reminded me that this word "equality" I keep using

might not mean what I think it does — and she bravely offers up a manifesto for true equality.

Why I Am Not A Feminist by Jessa Crispin (Melville House, 176 pages, \$33.99) comes from an author who has created an identity out of being a contrarian, true, but who also demands more of mainstream feminism than it's currently delivering. (She is indeed looking directly at all of us in our cute pink pussy hats.)

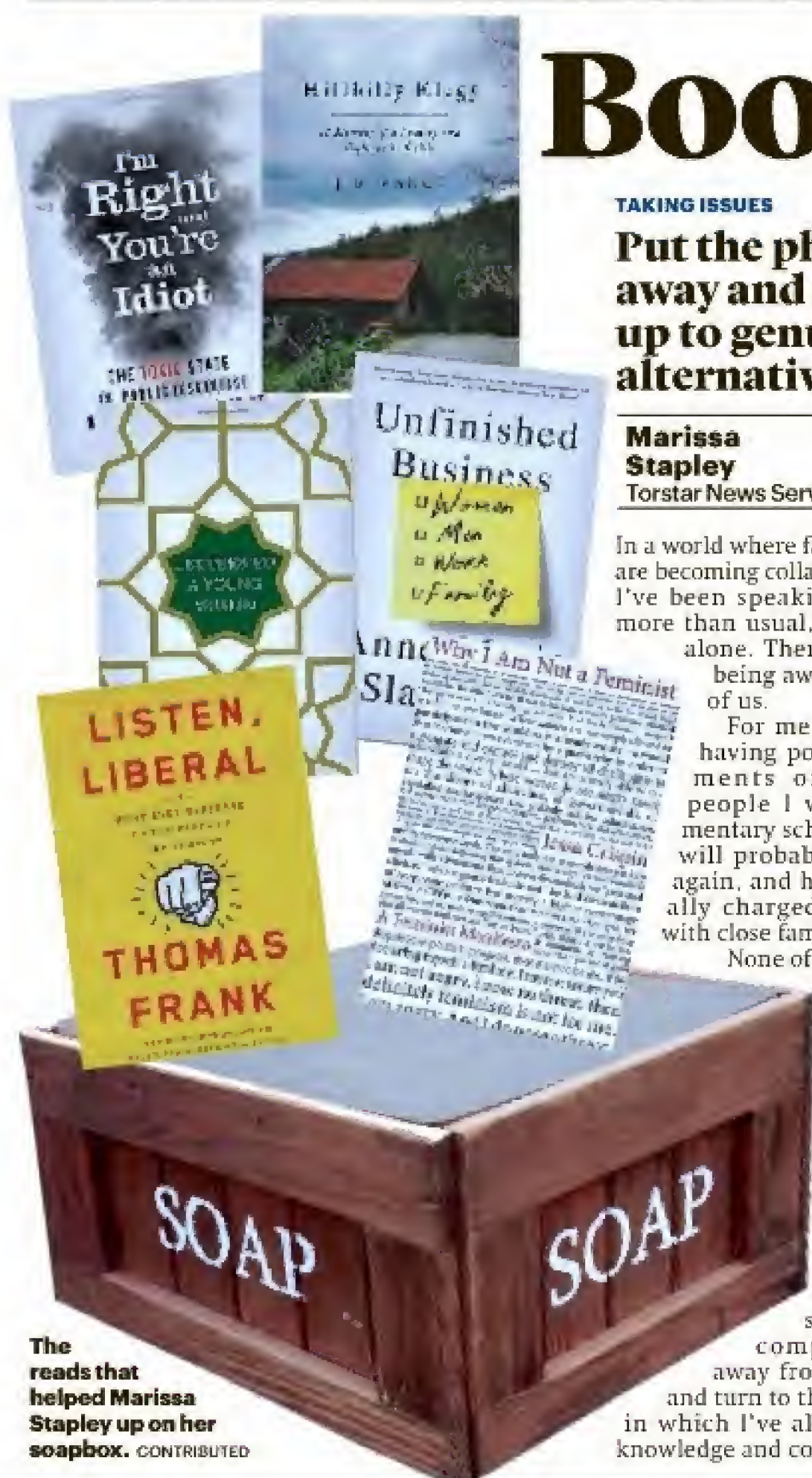
Conservatism

This is all just a beginning. I'm still searching — and late this week, my search led me to the Little Free Library on my street. And there it was, a battered volume called *Confessions of a Conservative*.

When I got it home, I realized it was written in 1979 by Pulitzer-Prize winning author Garry Wills. Wills is a Roman Catholic who has criticized the approach of the church to homosexuality, abortion and contraception. He once wrote an article for *The New York Review of Books* that took on the second amendment. He no longer calls himself a conservative, mostly because of his experiences covering the civil rights movement, for example — but also because the conservatives won't have him.

Wills was brave, both to stand for something and then to abandon it when listening to the other side led him to a new way of seeing. I'm planning to stay open to this, no matter where my current quest for balanced knowledge leads me.

Courage, as well as a stack of books, is imperative.



The reads that helped Marissa Stapley up on her soapbox. CONTRIBUTED

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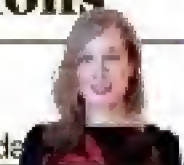
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Life in a techno-utopian paradise

INTERVIEW

Elan Mastai's debut novel draws on early fascinations

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada



Growing up, Elan Mastai was fascinated by his grandfather's collection of vintage science-fiction novels from the post-war era. He loved the stories contained within their brittle yellow pages, but especially the book covers.

He remembers staring at the garish illustrations of space adventurers, moon bases and flying cars. But even as a kid of the '80s, Mastai was already aware that the world had not exactly turned out the way these authors had imagined it. He remembers asking himself: "What happened to the future we were promised?"

Mastai's childhood fascination would never completely disappear, and later would become the genesis for his debut

novel, *All Our Wrong Todays*, a humorous but prescient tale set in an alternative, utopian version of 2016, where war and famine — and even browning avocados — don't exist.

The story is told from the perspective of Tom Barren, the slack-er son of a genius inventor who developed a time machine. After just gets the best of Tom and he sleeps with the wrong person, his actions create a domino effect and he is catapulted into a dystopian universe that is recognizable as our own world. There, Tom discovers another version of himself and his loved ones, and must decide where he wants to live.

The Toronto-based, Vancouver-raised screenwriter is best known for his work on the 2013 twenty-something's romance film *The F Word* (or *What If*, in the U.S.), starring



Elan Mastai imagines the mundanities of daily life in a futuristic setting. CONTRIBUTED

Daniel Radcliffe and Zoe Kazan. Initially, Mastai conceived *All Our Wrong Todays* as a film as well — and is currently working on the screenplay adaption, which was picked up by Paramount Pictures — but realized he wanted to tell this story as a faux memoir.

He had the idea back in 2009, but let it gestate for five

years before he started writing, carving out time during evenings and weekends, never imagining that it would become the hot ticket at the 2015 Frankfurt Book Fair, boasting a seven-figure deal and sales in 27 countries. "I had no anticipation of the response we were going to get," he says. "It's not even something I thought

about. It was gratifying but also mind-blowing."

Although Mastai was influenced by his early memories of his grandfather's books, and his visits to Expo 86 in Vancouver — the last World Fair to be hosted in North America — he didn't draw from specific sources, but rather the feelings inspired by those collective

cultural touchstones.

The book is filtered through a postwar perspective; an imagining of what a "techno-utopian paradise" would look like to someone in the 1950s.

"There would be certain social things that would seem odd to us now," Mastai says. "They have a different relationship with authority, with consumerism, gender roles play out differently. They didn't go through a lot of the political and social upheavals that we went through in the '60s, '70s and '80s."

As a writer, Mastai enjoyed deconstructing those classic tropes, and imagining them from another, more modern, angle.

"It's not just the dazzling idea of a flying car, but what would traffic be like? A car crash? And how would it affect your morning commute to work?" he asks. "How would teleportation affect your friendships and relationships? The technology is interesting, but more so are the unintended consequences."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.



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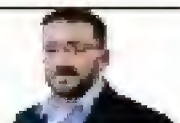
COMIC BOOKS

Roadmap for the rebels

Invisibles Book One

By: Grant Morrison, Steve Yeowell and others;
Publisher: DC Comics/Vertigo
\$24.99, 328 pages

Mike Donachie
Metro | Canada



Feel like rebelling? Join the resistance and the Invisibles with a book that's like a roadmap for fighting authority and thinking for yourself. If you want proof, it's right there on the second page, where the main character is introduced in the act of screaming an expletive while burning down his school library with a Molotov cocktail. And it only gets worse from there.

Reissued in new editions, this 1994-2000 series is perhaps the most challenging and complicated story created by Grant Morrison, best-known for complicated and challenging stories.

On the surface, it's the story of a teenager, Dane McGowan, who's a horrible little person fighting against pretty much everyone and everything. But delve deeper and it's the first volume of a treatise about government, power, identity, resistance, and — if its writer is to be believed — a working magic spell.

However deep you go, it's rewarding. There's plenty of action and big ideas, but beware: it could change how you think.



Growing up a little less normal

INTERVIEW

Cea Sunrise Person digs deeper into her complex past

Cea Sunrise Person recounted her unlikely journey from the wilds of Western Canada to the worlds of high fashion in her bestselling memoir *North of Normal*, but she wasn't ready to close the book on her unorthodox upbringing.

In *Nearly Normal* (HarperCollins), the Vancouver-based author shares anecdotes left untold in her debut memoir, in which she chronicled childhood years with her pot-growing, free-loving family living in a teepee.

Eighteen months after her birth to her teen mom Michelle in 1969, Person's anti-establishment grandfather known as Papa Dick decided to relocate the free-spirited family of hippies from California to Canada.

Until she was five, Person lived in Kootenay Plains and Morley, Alta., where her family hunted and gathered their food, and created a stove dubbed the Guzzler out of a rusty, old barrel.

Person recounts stories of working as a model from age 13 to 30, jetsetting to picturesque locales and also experiencing the less glitzy side of the industry.

In each chapter of *Nearly Normal*, she revisits seminal moments of her past balanced with reflections of her adult life as she strives to achieve a sense of stability often lacking in her



Nearly Normal is Cea Sunrise Person's follow-up to *North of Normal*. FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

earlier years.

"From about (the ages of) 30 to 40, I was in this awful place in my life where I can't believe I'd built this normal life I'd always wanted, but it's totally fake and it's totally falling apart," Person, 47, said in a recent interview in Toronto, recalling the crumbling of her second marriage.

"I knew there were consequences and that I hadn't dealt with my past, so it had caught up with me. But I couldn't see the really obvious connection until I started writing."

Person writes of how her grandparents had shunned boundaries, discipline and formal education, leaving their four kids uneducated and with "few life skills." In addition to

engaging in drug use and sex with various partners, they also struggled with mental illness.

She also candidly recounts some of the more harrowing experiences of her upbringing, including being sexually abused.

"It was emotional, but not in the way that you would think," Person recalled. "I didn't get upset in writing about it — especially towards people that might have hurt me."

"I got more upset at my family for kind of putting the blinders on and not really wanting to

know because to them, it was just like, 'Well, Cea, you know, that's life — don't be so uptight.'

"I really realized how much harm that had done me, but I also realized in some ways I'd had some great examples from my family, and so I needed to take those away from the situation, too."

Person also delves into her complex relationship with her late mother, who died in 2007. She recalls her mom's series of topsy-turvy relationships, and reflected upon the impact on

her own life and romantic partnerships.

Despite the challenges within their mother-daughter dynamic, Person paints a warm portrait of her mom as a grandmother who formed an "amazing bond" with her eldest son.

"My mother was not the pattern-breaker in her family. She raised me the way that she was raised and for her, that was totally fine. She loved that lifestyle.... It could have gone both ways. I could have been like her. I could be living my life and repeating whatever she did — but I just wasn't that person," Person said.

"I wanted something completely different. I'm not angry at her. I forgive her."

Person said she was initially nervous about sharing her story, one that she had once carefully guarded and felt had been "a source of shame."

Those pangs eased after receiving warm feedback from readers, some of whom had known her family or related to her story. Others spoke of their desire to live life off the grid, expressed fascination with the hippie movement, or shared their own struggles to find acceptance.

"I think there was just a lot of curiosity of how I was able to overcome all of that craziness, and so I felt like my book helped quite a few people — and I wanted that to continue."

"That's my mission: to try to help people if I can."

THE CANADIAN PRESS



I think there was a lot of curiosity of how I was able to overcome all of that craziness.

Cea Sunrise Person

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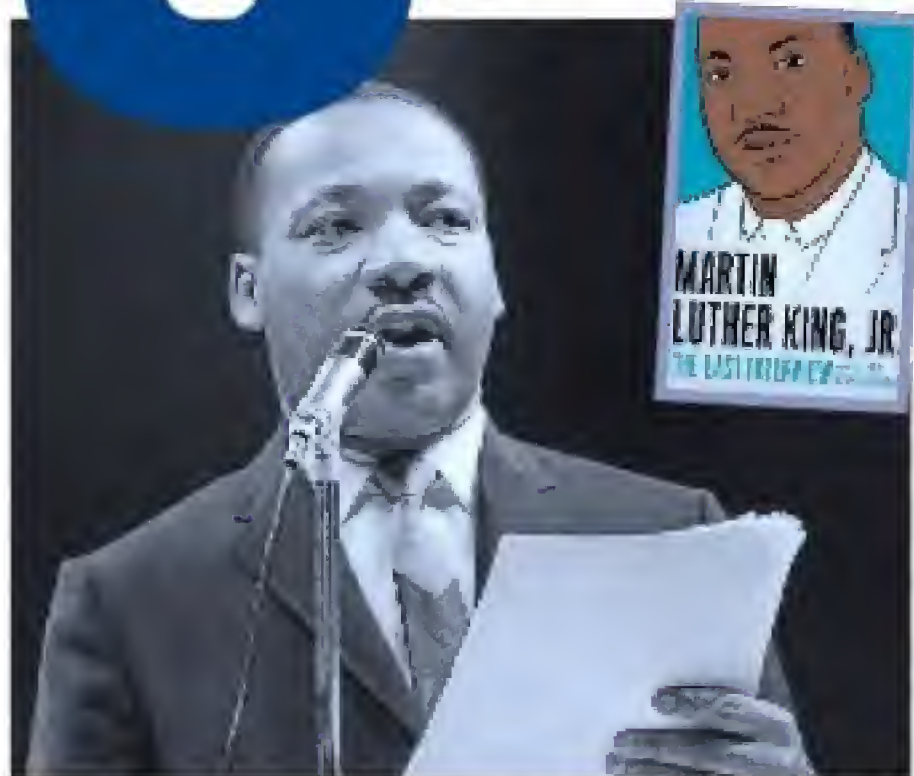


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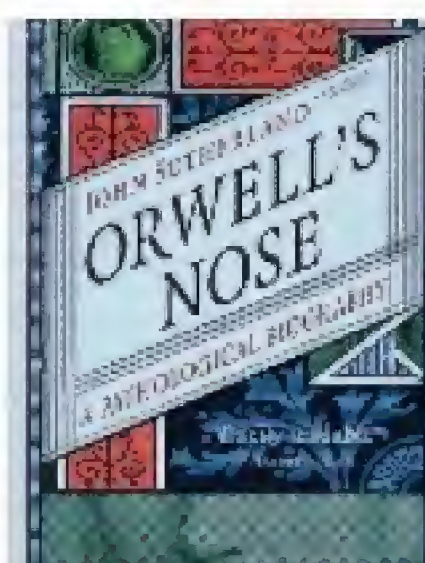
5 BIOGRAPHIES OF 20TH CENTURY MEN

The complicated and fascinating men featured in these new books left an indelible mark on our lives. These new biographies explore the stories of men who shaped 20th century thinking. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



1 Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

For the past six years, Melville House, the Brooklyn publishing house and bookstore, has been publishing its Last Interview Series, collectible paperbacks featuring the final interview (and in most cases earlier interviews, and quite often a critical assessment) with our most treasured culture heroes. There have been 18 published to date, including, in recent months, **The Last Interview Series and other Conversations: Oliver Sacks, J.D. Salinger, Martin Luther King, Jr.**



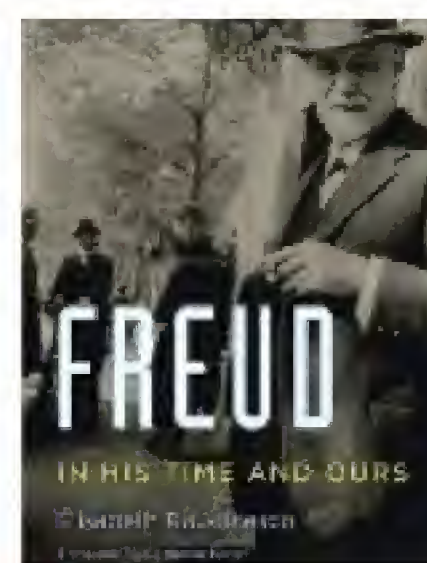
2 George Orwell

Three years ago, two events intersected in John Sutherland's life. He lost his sense of smell and he began rereading the works of George Orwell. Sutherland began noting the extent to which the great British novelist relied on smell, and thus began his research for **Orwell's Nose** ("airing out the odors, fetors, stench and reeks trapped in the pages of Orwell's books").



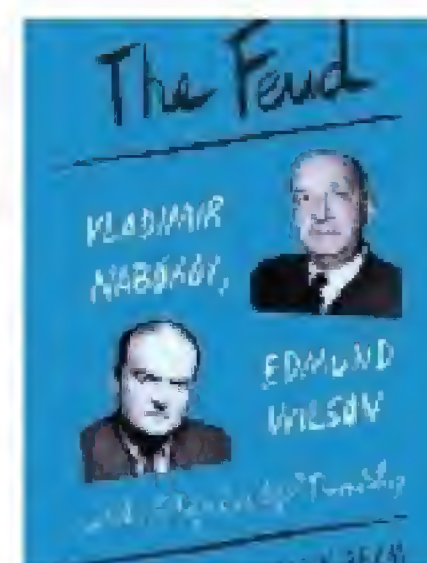
3 John Berger

John Berger, who died in January at age 90, was a monumental presence in the world of letters. He was a painter, then an art critic, novelist, screenwriter and broadcaster. He had a legion of friends, admirers and collaborators, and 37 of them have contributed to **A Jar of Wild Flowers**, a buoyant, thoughtful and idiosyncratic collection of essays paying tribute to a fully realized life.



4 Sigmund Freud

Elizabeth Roudinesco tells us in her introduction to **Freud: In His Time and Ours** that Freud's prodigious output has provided grist for "several dozen" biographies. Her reinterpretation of this paradoxical personality is the first Freud biography of the new century and adds fresh insight because she had access to archival material that only entered the public domain in 2010.

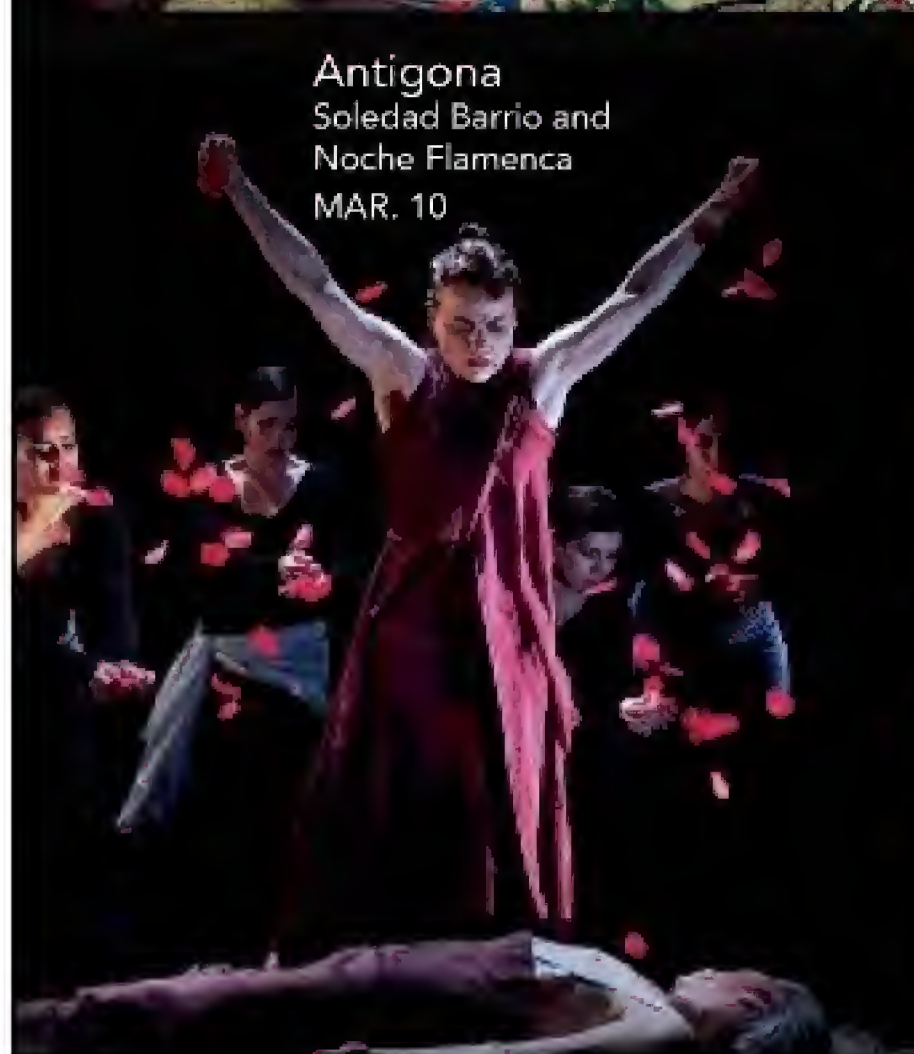


5 Nabokov and Wilson

Literary critic Edmund Wilson helped Vladimir Nabokov establish himself when he washed up on U.S. shores in 1940. They were friends until the Russian expat published his 2,000-page examination of Pushkin's famed *Onegin*. Wilson let loose with a scathing 6,800-word review that signalled the first volley in a great literary feud. Alex Beam's **The Feud** is hugely entertaining.



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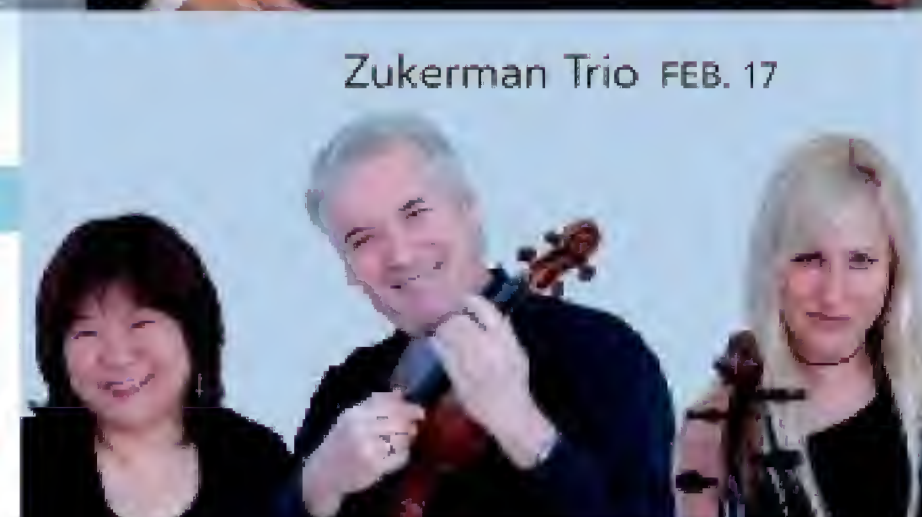
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The man who connected us

OBITUARY

Tributes pour in for beloved Vinyl Cafe host Stuart McLean

Stuart McLean, a bestselling author, journalist and humorist who was “firmly committed to celebrating the positive, joyful and funny side of life” through his popular CBC Radio program *The Vinyl Cafe*, has died. He was 68.

“We were deeply saddened to learn that Stuart McLean passed away earlier today. Stuart was an exceptional storyteller who has left an indelible mark on CBC Radio and countless communities across Canada,” read a statement from Susan Marjetti, executive director of radio and audio for CBC English Services.

In December, McLean announced he was suspending the long-running program to focus

on treatment for melanoma, which he was diagnosed with in late 2015. He said his first round of immunotherapy treatment that winter was not completely successful and he needed to undergo another round this year.

The *Vinyl Cafe* radio show, which featured a mix of stories, essays and musical performances, was spun off into bestselling books and became a touring production in 2008. The show’s stories centred on Dave, the owner of a secondhand record store, and also featured Dave’s wife, Morley, their two

children, Sam and Stephanie, and various friends.

“Every week for 22 years, Stuart connected with his listeners in a way that few before him have. His Dave and Morley stories were as entertaining as they were enlightening; they made us pause, reflect, but most of all laugh along together,” said Marjetti.

A posting on the official *Vinyl Cafe* website said the staff behind the show were “finding comfort in memories of our dear friend.”

“Stuart always emphasized that the world is a good place, full of good people, trying to do their best. He believed in people’s extraordinary capacity for love and generosity. And he had faith in our ability to work together for the common good,” the message reads.

“Stuart connected us — to our country and to each other. He entertained us, he made us think, he made us smile. Occasionally he made us cry. And, through all



His Dave and Morley stories made us pause, reflect, but most of all laugh along together

CBC’s Susan Marjetti



Humorist, radio host and author Stuart McLean was an officer of the Order of Canada and a professor emeritus at Ryerson University in Toronto. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

of that, he reminded us that life is made up of small moments. We never know which ones will be forgotten and which ones will stay with us forever.”

McLean had been upbeat about his cancer setback and told fans in an online message posted in December that he expected to return to work.

“I don’t want you to worry

about me. A year ago I told you that I expected this to be just a bump in the road, not the end of the road. I still believe that to be true. I hope we will meet up again — on the radio or in theatres. We’ll make sure to tell you before that happens,” McLean wrote.

“In the meantime, look after yourselves and each other. And

know that this isn’t goodbye. It’s just ... so long for now.”

On Twitter, comedian Mark Critch of the CBC show *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* paid tribute to McLean. “I wrote several #StuartMcLean parodies for ‘22.’ They were easy to write because I was such a fan of his work. I’ll miss his Canada,” Critch tweeted.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Tina Kurdi, the aunt of late brothers Alan and Ghalib Kurdi, will pen the family’s story. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

MEMOIR

Kurdi’s aunt to write family story

The aunt of a drowned Syrian toddler who became a haunting symbol of the country’s refugee crisis will be sharing her story in a forthcoming book.

Tina Kurdi’s memoir *The Boy on the Beach: A Syrian Family’s Story of Love, Loss, and Hope During the Global Refugee Crisis* will be published by Simon & Schuster Canada in spring of 2018.

The heartbreaking photo of young Alan Kurdi’s lifeless body lying face down on a Turkish beach received worldwide attention in 2015 and generated outrage over the plight of refugees fleeing war-ravaged Syria. His brother Ghalib and mother Rihanna also drowned.

Tina Kurdi, who is based in Coquitlam, B.C., was thrust into the media spotlight and became a public face of the family’s grief.

She later sponsored Alan Kurdi’s uncle and her brother, Mohammed, and his family, who arrived in B.C. last year.

The Boy on the Beach will chronicle her own journey from Syria to Canada, and speak to her family’s search for safety during a time of war.

“I hope this book will inspire people and bring all of us together, making us stronger, with love, compassion and hope for a brighter future,” she said in a statement on Wednesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

LEWIS ON LIST

Governor General Awards recipients announced

A sculptor whose best-known ceramics work was once rejected for display at a World Expo by the federal government is among the winners of this year’s Governor General’s Awards in Visual and Media Arts.

Glenn Lewis is one of eight laureates who will be honoured by the Canada Council for the Arts, the organization announced Wednesday. The Vancouver artist shook the art scene with his 1970 piece *Artifact*, which was commissioned by Canada for the World Expo in Osaka, Japan but rejected by the pavilion’s commissioner Patrick Reid as too provocative.

Other recipients of the \$25,000 honour include Montreal filmmaker Michelle Cournoyer, whose career in the Quebec new wave movement of the 1970s led to experimental animation shorts like *Le chapeau*, which won best Canadian short at the 2000 Toronto International Film Festival.

Writer Philip Monk, both an exhibition curator and contemporary art critic for *Maclean’s* magazine, is also being honoured.

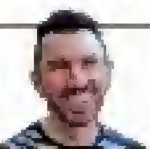
THE CANADIAN PRESS

'She's the character you love to hate'

INTERVIEW

Laura Dern finds sympathy for her alpha mom character

Ryan Porter
For Metro Canada



In the HBO miniseries *Big Little Lies*, Laura Dern plays Renata Klein, the Queen of Monterey, California, whose idea of a fabulous summer vacation is joining the board of Pappal.

When Renata is pitted against a fellow alpha mom, played by Reese Witherspoon, murder, naturally, ensues. The Oscar-nominated actor spoke to Metro about finding sympathy for "the character that you love to hate."

What was it like to film in a beautiful beachfront home?

So. Gorgeous. When they showed the first episode at a premiere this week, when people saw me on my deck, they laughed. They think they know that person. The richest one. The most powerful.

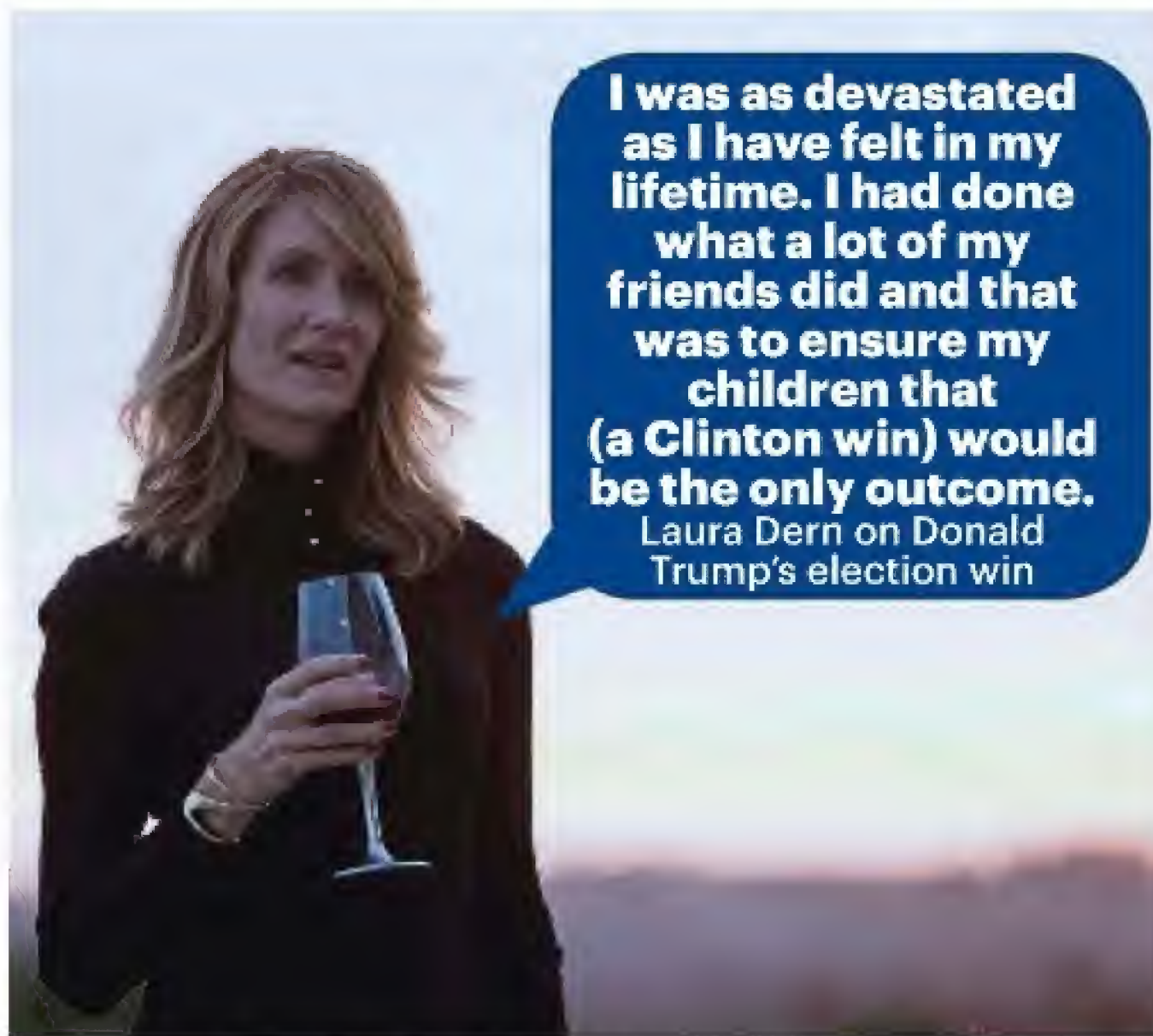
And the minute you set that up she becomes the character that you love to hate.

How did you find sympathy for her?

It's interesting to see how men and fathers interact in the world, and no one's judging their parenting based on their career or lack of career. But they are judging a working mom.

Your costar Shailene Woodley said that when Donald Trump won, she had already grieved his win. Were you surprised?

I was as devastated as I have felt in my lifetime. I had done what a lot of my friends did and that was to ensure my children that (Hillary Clinton's win) would be the only outcome. And I was right, because 3.4 million more people voted for her. She did win people's vote. Having worked on the film *Recount* for HBO, I went through a lot of research to play a woman who was notorious for helping voter suppression and voter fraud. It exists every time we have (an election),



I was as devastated as I have felt in my lifetime. I had done what a lot of my friends did and that was to ensure my children that (a Clinton win) would be the only outcome.
Laura Dern on Donald Trump's election win

Oscar-nominated actress Laura Dern plays Renata Klein in HBO's *Big Little Lies*. CONTRIBUTED

but if you're going to add another country's involvement, it means the system is broken and your voice may be overlooked. How do you explain that to your kids?

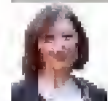
A recent study found that Americans ranked busy people, like your character, as high status. Do you see a shift in how people look at work/life balance?

As Americans, we hurry ourselves to make it all happen as fast as possible. Art doesn't work that way. The great artists that inspired me are the ones that take time and let things gestate.

If you had known as a child that you would grow up to be in a Star Wars movie, what would you have thought?

I was raised by actors, and I wouldn't have dreamt it up. It never occurred to me until I was on set and I looked around. I was literally in shock and I was eight years old seeing *Star Wars* for the first time.

Big Little Lies premieres Feb. 19 at 9 p.m. ET/PT on HBO Canada.



JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Cut-cut-cutting to the heart of the tension

THE SHOW: *Big Little Lies*, Season 1, Episode 3 (HBO)
THE MOMENT: The therapy session (contains spoilers)

Celeste (Nicole Kidman) and Perry's (Alexander Skarsgard) life looks art-directed: gorgeous, rich, with twin sons and a seaside mansion. But there's a crack in the foundation: He hits her. She hits him back. Now they're meeting a couples' therapist (Robin Weigert).

Celeste and Perry sit on the couch. Immediately, it's uncomfortable. "Things can just get a bit volatile," Celeste begins tentatively. "We fight a lot."

"Are we talking about a physical expression of anger?" the therapist asks. Slowly, they admit they are (though they minimize it).

"I've always been afraid she'd go through me," Perry finally says. "Outgrow me. Figure me out. I'm constantly looking for evidence she doesn't love me."

This show is TV crack for me, a juicy, addictive soap opera but with seriously good writing and acting, as if *Peyton Place* were made like *The Wire*. (The seven



Nicole Kidman and Alexander Skarsgard's perfect life is in fact less than perfect in HBO's *Big Little Lies*. CONTRIBUTED

hour-long episodes are written by 90's TV king David E. Kelley and directed by Canada's Jean-Marc Vallée.)

Its one flaw: It falls prey to the current fashion of cutting its timeline to ribbons, and showing us ultra-brief flashbacks and forwards, images without context, that we're supposed to figure out later: a woman running, footprints on a beach, neighbors gossiping in a police interrogation.

But then it gives us scenes

like the one above, a six-minute squirm with long two-shots of Kidman and Skarsgard. She keeps darting her eyes at him, desperately reading his face for clues.

Anyone can create drama if they cut-cut-cut. But the suspense in these long takes is both delicious and painful.

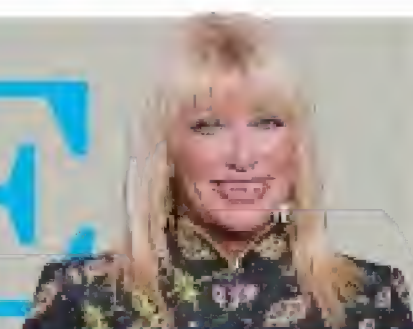
Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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VIRIDIAN CONDOS

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Project overview

Affordable and accessible, three contemporary condos boast nine-foot ceilings, four-inch baseboards, one-inch aluminum venetian blinds, Decora switches throughout, in-slab heating and a programmable thermostat. There are 18 units available for immediate possession and Building 6000 is under construction.

Housing amenities

This project features energy-efficient windows and a vinyl deck in each unit. There is also a communal social room in Building 3 that is available for all homeowners to enjoy and entertain large groups. Each building has its own elevator, Telus structured wiring and USB plugs.

Location and transit

Viridian is located in a beautiful part of the city and backs onto a reserve with spanning views. Transit runs in front of the property with Route 425 and it is also close to major roadways including Shaganappi Trail at the edge of the city.

In the neighbourhood

This northwest neighbourhood is loaded with schools, walking paths and shopping centres nearby including Walmart, the only City Loblaw's in Calgary, Creekside Shopping Centre, CrossIron Mills and the Symons Valley Farmer's Market. KRISTA SYLVESTER/FOR METRO

+ NEED TO KNOW

What: Viridian Condos
Builder: Trico Communities
Location: Sage Hill NW
Building: Six buildings total
Interior: Granite countertops, stainless steel appliance package
Suites: Eight different floor plans of two bedrooms, two bathrooms
Sizes: 629 to 970 square feet
Pricing: \$200,000 and

\$300,000
Status: Completion of Building 6000 in November 2017
Sales centre: 101 and 103 12 Sage Hill Terrace NW
Hours: Monday to Thursday 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Phone: (587) 296-2283
Email: viridian@tricohomes.com
Website: viridiancondos.ca



REAL ESTATE

What's hot on the market

1 NOW SELLING

The Ashford of Altadore by Brookfield: This 18-unit townhome development is located in the heart of the established community of Altadore and starts in the \$600,000s. The Ashford site is located at 48th Ave. and 16th St. SW.

2 NOW SELLING

Vibe by FRAM+Slokker: This intimate boutique-style project will front on the pedestrian Riff in the heart of East Village between Fort Calgary and the new 5th Street Square. Check out the sales centre at 553 Riverfront Ave. SE.

3 STILL SELLING

Killarney Townes by Street-Side Developments: Luxury infill townhomes conveniently located inner city yet with the atmosphere of quiet living. The perfect location for townhome-style living. Arrange a private tour of the projected located at 2432 30th St. SW.

KRISTA SYLVESTER/FOR METRO

The right steps to refinish stairways

HOME REPAIR

Contractors offer best tips on what can be a messy job

Stairs and stairways are often last on the list when it comes to home renovations, even though they are frequently the first thing you and everyone else sees upon opening the front door.

Although not prohibitively expensive, refurbishing stairs is a messy and skilled job beyond the reach of average DIYers. The basics, though, aren't hard to grasp and with a little help you can take the first steps to elevate your stairs.

Older homes, especially, will need stair repairs and upgrades, says Jordan Spear, a RenoMark contractor.

When it comes to restoring staircases, "the first thing is to look at the structure for safety," says Spear, who specializes in restoring century homes. "You want to make sure the treads aren't too worn and 'cupping,' and that the nosing is secure and that the railing is all secure and the components solid."

Refinishing and staining

First, assess the wood, says Chris Palmer, also a RenoMark contractor who was an industrial designer before appearing on TV shows such as Canada's Handyman Challenge, Income Property, Open House Overhaul and serving as Global TV's resident handyman expert.

Stairs made from good hardwood, such as oak or maple, are usually worth refinishing. Peel back a section of carpet or runner to check the wood. If it's low-grade pine or spruce (called "builder grade") then painting, capping or re-carpeting are the only options, says TV contractor Damon Bennett, another RenoMark contractor.

If you're lucky, you might need to just replace the most damaged treads. To refinish, remove the carpet and underpad, pull out all the staples, then fill and sand before painting or staining.

"You can't put water-based stains on oil-based stains, so make sure you get the right product," says Spear.

Capping

An alternative to re-carpeting is re-treading, or capping with new treads. Sometimes called false treads, they can sit on top of the existing ones. After that it's a matter of replacing or repainting the risers.

Re-treading involves knocking out the existing treads. Replacing them and capping aren't as easy as it sounds, warn the renovators.

Capping will also change the



A staircase in a Toronto home before renovations. The place had previously served as a rooming house. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

rise of the step and you'll be short at the top and high at the bottom. Even just a half-inch difference can cause a stumble. There are veneer tread options in the \$20-\$30 range but the ideal is solid wood, at \$30 and up, depending on the type of wood. Also, you'll either have to make your winders (the triangle-shaped larger treads that allow for a turn), or have them made.

To have a set of 14 stairs capped with red oak treads and risers, including three winders, (plus a corresponding new banister with new newels and spindles) will cost \$5,000-6,000 — or more, depending on where you are, who does the work and how much labour is required.

Painting

With worn or low-grade stairs, aside from re-carpeting or capping, the other option is painting.

As with staining, prep is everything. Pull out all the staples, fill in the holes then sand, sand and sand again. A shop-vac attachment for your sander will help, as will sealing the work area with plastic sheeting. Wear a dust mask and eye protection.

Check out the pro-level painting stores such as Dulux, Sherwin-Williams or Benjamin Moore

for their special tread paint that's water based and designed to take foot traffic. If there's a previous oil-based stain or paint on the stairs, you'll need a bonding and transition coat of primer.

A good paint supplier can match the paint to the trim or to the wall. Painting the treads a dark colour and the trim and risers in white is a popular look.

Railings, carpet and rods

If you're re-carpeting because the wood isn't worth refinishing, consider upgrading the entire look with new railings.

Do you replace wood spindles with wrought-iron or vice versa? Esthetics aside, it's also question of skill. Taking a railing apart can be tricky, notes Bennett.

"You can't cut them out if you want to use them again so you've really got to be careful," he says. "If you don't do it right, it will look off. It's really best to get someone in who has the experience and skill."

Stair runners are for both esthetics and firm footing, especially for kids and seniors.

Runners can be bought by the foot and installed. Or you can have carpet cut and the edges bound to create your own runner.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ANATOMY

What to call that spindly thing

Parts of a staircase, explained

1 Riser

The vertical face between treads.

2 Tread

The step part of a stairs.

3 Nosing

The rounded part of the tread. Some stairs are flat with no nosing, also called a bull nose.

4 Newel post

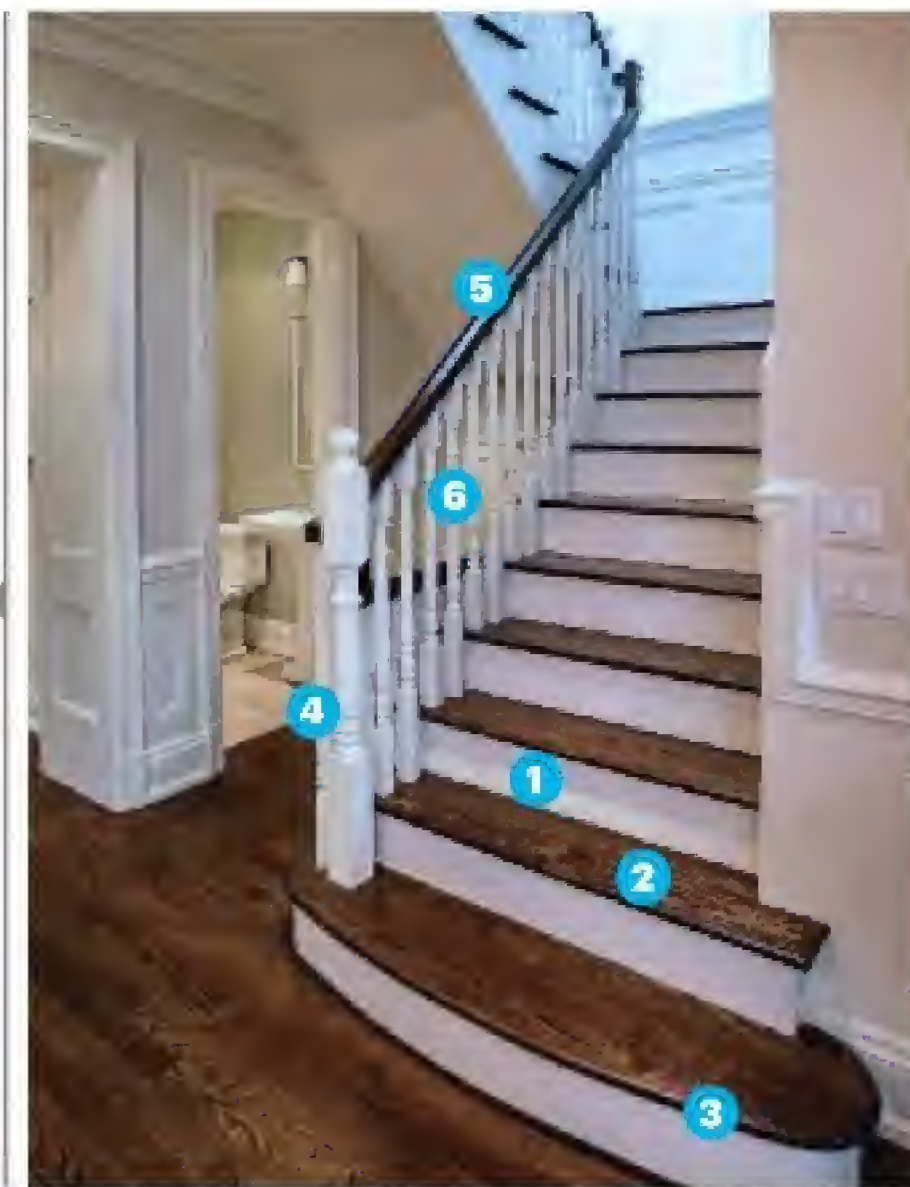
The vertical posts at the bottom and top of the stairs which the railings attach to.

5 Bannister

Also called a handrail.

6 Spindles

Also known as balustrades, they are the vertical pieces which make up the railing.



Using the right words makes communicating with hardware store staff and contractors easier. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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The Azria's 1930s estate hits the market

SUNSET BLVD.

A peek inside Maison du Soleil reveals signature hue

It's sunny side up all the way at Maison du Soleil on Sunset Blvd. Smiles are built into the colourful décor and cosiness envelopes every room of the Los Angeles trophy estate.

The luxuriously appointed home was intended to be "candy for the eyes," according to owner Lubov Azria, half of the power couple behind the fashion house BCBG Max Azria Group.

Much of the house is decorated in cheery orange, her husband Max's favourite colour, Azria says during a video tour for Haute Havens.

With its scale and grandeur — 60 rooms in total — the "house of the sun" is beyond spacious. Yet you never feel lost or overwhelmed, according to Alla Furman of Hilton & Hyland, an affiliate of Christie's International Real Estate.

"It's very cosy the way it's furnished," she says. "It's grand because of the high ceilings but there's a warmth that makes it very inviting and livable."

As one example, Azria describes her living room as "happy," with its collection of sunburst mirrors — which give the house its name — and whimsical touches, such as toy sheep lined up along one wall.

The room itself is alive with vibrant jewel tones, anchored by a wavy-patterned area carpet.

Maison du Soleil was designed in the late 1930s by architect Paul

Williams, whose classic Hollywood homes have been occupied by celebrities such as Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Denzel Washington, among others.

After the Azrias bought the house from writer and producer Sidney Sheldon, they did a major renovation and rebuild 10 years ago, which blended contemporary design elements with classic architecture. The gated estate near Beverly Hills occupies just over one hectare in the Holmby Hills neighbourhood, which is home to such celebrity pads as the Playboy Mansion.

In keeping with the glamorous lifestyles of area residents, the Azrias have enjoyed entertaining as many as 150 people in their lavish abode. They've also raised six children there.

A separate 6,000-square-foot building houses a home theatre with a catalogue of 7,000 films to entertain guests. Above the theatre is a guest suite and office, which Max has embellished with a 14-karat gold ceiling.

The former pool house, converted to a sumptuous spa, boasts a Moroccan theme that creates the atmosphere of a Mediterranean vacation, according to Furman.

She's also captivated by the estate's five themed gardens, including French and Japanese, where "you feel like you're surrounded by nature."

After numerous visits to the elegant and energizing compound, Furman sums up the experience in simple terms: "It's like you're in paradise."

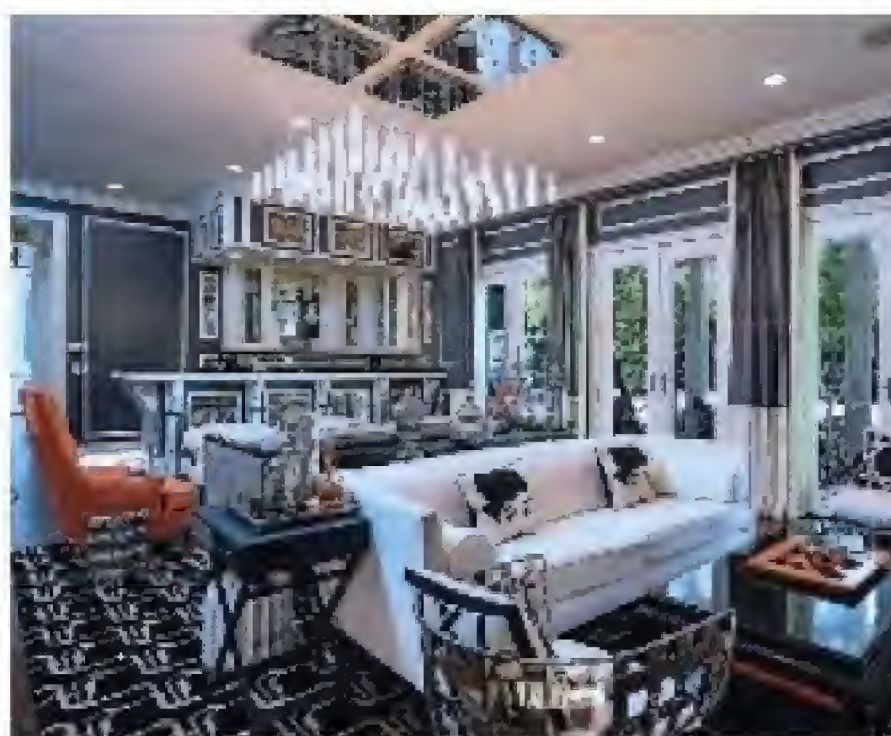
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THE LISTING

Price: \$88M
Size: 30,000 sq. ft.
Bedrooms: 17
Bathrooms: 22



The livingroom is a kaleidoscope of colour with vibrant accents and sunburst mirrors.



Ubiquitous orange accents inject pops of cheeriness to the bar lounge.



A 3-D ceiling installation reflects pumpkin-coloured carpets in entertainment area. ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

+ BRING IT HOME

Develop an orange crush

Chase away the winter blahs by bringing the sun inside. Warm shades of yellow and orange can enliven a room with a painted feature wall or new accents, such as cushions, table linens and artwork.

A potted plant or fresh flowers will bring affordable, instant freshness and colour to a space.

To let in more natural light and get a jump on spring cleaning, wash windows, replace heavy window coverings with lightweight fabrics or shades, or add a large mirror or shiny surfaces to reflect incoming light.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

DÉCOR

Get your home red-carpet-ready with Badgley Mischka

Design duo Mark Badgley and James Mischka, known for show-stopping red-carpet gowns, are bringing the glamour of their fashion shows to a living room near you.

The designers describe their first-ever Badgley Mischka Home Collection, launched this week, as "couture furniture" infused with old Hollywood glamour.

"We love when a piece of furniture has a little bit of atmosphere to it, where it sort of harks back to the golden era of Hollywood. At the same time, it's our quest to keep every piece modern. So it's been a real luxury and a real treat to work on something besides a red-carpet ball gown," said Badgley during an exclusive sneak peek of the collection in Los Angeles.

Badgley and Mischka also pulled inspiration straight from their runway collection, which they presented Feb. 14 during New York Fashion Week. Some of the furniture was used in the show.

"We used a lot of fabrics that were reminiscent of fabrics that we are using on the couture collection," said Mischka. "Our (fashion) collection is done with a lot of hand-beading and a lot of very intricate work on the couture gowns. And this collection also has handwork on it. All the finishes are distressed by hand. It's extremely labour intensive, which is very much like our couture gowns."

Their approach to designing for the dining room and the red carpet is the same: The devil is in the details.

"We were very involved, from sketching. We scoured Europe for fabrications. We flew in tiny little planes to the middle of nowhere where we could find the craftsmanship to execute certain processes. It was a real labour of love," Badgley said.

The collection ranges in price from \$100 to \$10,000 and includes accent pieces, beds, chairs, sofas, tables, cabinets, candles and artwork. It will be available on the designers' website and at Neiman Marcus.

Colorful sketches of Badgley Mischka gowns were blown up and framed. Lush fabrics line a gold, zebra-print bench and a velvet octagonal coffee table.

Like a dress with a wow moment on the back, there's

a sleek, grey couch with striking geometric wood pattern only seen from behind.

Their favourite piece? A masculine, dark wood desk with gold detailing and curved architectural flair.

"It's very sensual," Badgley said. "It's very simple. Nothing pretentious about it, but the finishings make it, and elevate it to such a couture piece."

"These pieces are timeless. James and I have never liked trendy pieces. We don't like trendy clothes. We certainly don't like trendy furniture. When James and I buy a piece, we want to know that it's going to be in the home for the next 20, 30, 40 years. And that, to us, is what this furniture stands for."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Fashion designers Mischka and Badgley launch furniture line infused with old Hollywood glamour. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HIP NEIGHBOURHOOD, WELL-CRAFTED HOME

When something is Smithed, it's been crafted carefully and with skill.

Smith, a new condominium collection on 6th Street at 15th Avenue SW in Calgary's Beltline neighbourhood, is carefully thought-out from the inside out.

The move-in-ready development offers features that cater to the busy lifestyles of its residents. The bike share and tool library at Smith were designed to make your life easier, and the concierge offers another level of convenience, providing a friendly face for your guests and a safe pair of hands to receive your packages.

The well-crafted feel continues with Smith's interiors. Built by 300-year-old developer Grosvenor, Smith's quality lies in its details.

The kitchen, for instance, was made for creating. Use it to its fullest — you'll have all the right tools built in, including the gas cooktop, integrated dishwasher, European appliance package and seamless cabinetry.

The main bathrooms will keep you toasty with warm Nuheat flooring. The frameless glass showers, polished quartz slab countertops and undermount sinks will provide a spa-

like backdrop for your morning rituals.

Smith's contemporary designs make them just as fun to look at as to live in.

Speaking of fun, you'll find a lot of that in the community. The Beltline neighbourhood is known for its hot spots. Looking for a great place to meet a friend for a drink? There's a plethora of fine beer and cocktails to discover. National beer hall pours Alberta craft beers. Ox and Angela is the spot for late-night libations, with an impressive cocktail menu. Model Milk offers some of Calgary's most creative food and drinks. These spots are just the tip of the iceberg when you're looking for a night out nearby.

You're close to all the benefits of the neighbourhood, yet it takes less than 10 minutes to walk into downtown — about 15 to walk to The CORE Shopping Centre.

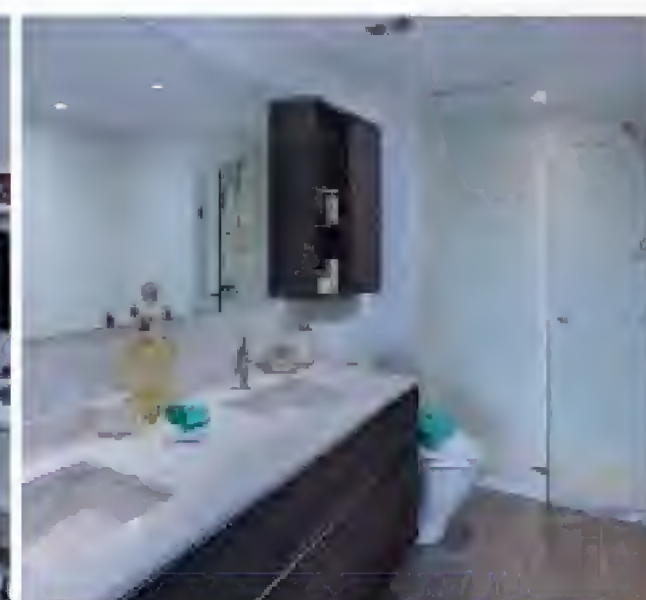
If you work downtown and you want an affordable home in a trendy neighbourhood, the Smith was made for you.

Visitors are welcome to tour the Smith's in-building presentation centre at 103-1501 6th Street SW. Open Monday to Thursday from 12-6 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 12-5 p.m. Drop in or call 403-264-1703.



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Giving yourself reasonable short- and long-term timelines is the best first step in budget management. iSTOCK

Balancing where your money goes

DEBT MANAGEMENT

Student loan repayment, childcare costs and RRSP contributions: it is all possible

Liz Bruckner

In the quest for higher education, Farrah Hunter* has acquired a significant amount of debt. Approximately \$80,000 worth.

Having earned her undergraduate honours degree, masters degree, and graduate diploma, the 42-year-old teacher, and single parent of one, is currently working while completing her PhD, and is very open about her financial situation. "I'm not in a position to even think about paying off my debt or to start investing as I'm currently living hand to mouth," she says. "Caring for my child is my biggest and only priority."

Tammie Williams knows the feeling. The 36-year-old married mother of one has managed to pay off her \$14,000 student debt since graduating with diplomas from both Durham and Seneca Colleges, but her husband's lingering OSAP loans coupled with child-related costs make getting ahead financially feel impossible. "We pay bills according to their

due dates, spend more time with our child by working fewer days and longer hours, and choose to rent instead of buy. Our bills are paid and our daughter is happy, but there's very little cash left at the end of each month."

According to Michael Holmberg, a chartered accountant with Avarad Lindsay Holmberg LLP, while it's very common that young parents feel overwhelmed by dismal and often record-high post-secondary-education debt scenarios, there's always hope. "The first step I recommend is taking a good look at your required spending, versus the spending done on items that you can go without. It can be a challenge at first to narrow things down, but eventually, people who get into the habit of creating these kinds of spending reports allow them to plan for bigger investments."

Giving yourself reasonable short- and long-term timelines to follow is wise, says Holmberg, as both can be effective and al-

low for progression in budget management. From there, setting up an automated weekly or monthly contribution to an RRSP or TFSA so you're 'paying yourself first' and not spending pointlessly is prudent.

When it comes to child-related costs, make a point of scaling back as much as possible. While paying for before- and/or after-school care is often unavoidable for working parents, splurging on the newest toys, gadgets, clothes, accessories, and activities is not. Enlist family and friends to help with childcare where possible, stick to providing the basics, eat out less frequently, and start checking local community or municipality websites to stay current on the free kids programs they offer. (Many organizations will waive or reduce registration fees for kids whose parents volunteer or coach, so consider getting involved to save some money.)

Lastly, make a habit of monitoring your online banking accounts so you're aware of your financial standing, and should you end up with extra cash throughout the year, use it to further your financial goals. "If your focus is to eliminate debt, put the funds toward that endeavour. If you want to earn as much money as possible and you have a line of credit with six per cent interest but you can earn eight per cent on investment, that strategy can work, as well," says Holmberg.

*Not subject's real name

“...taking a good look at your required spending, versus the spending done on items that you can go without...”

Michael Holmberg,
chartered accountant, Avarad
Lindsay Holmberg LLP



THIS SPECIAL REPORT WAS CREATED BY CONTENT SOLUTIONS, INDEPENDENT OF METRO EDITORIAL.

Little known facts about RRSPs

Vikram Barhat

It's RRSP season. The time of year when millions of Canadians scramble to work out how much, or if, they can contribute to their Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). But many of them will not know how best they can exploit the savings vehicle other than park cash in it.

There are some lesser known and perhaps misunderstood facts about RRSPs that expand their utility and offer new ways in which they can be used to achieve saving goals.

The Home Buyers' Plan: First-time home buyers can tap the

Home Buyers' Plan, under which they can withdraw up to \$25,000 tax-free from their RRSP to buy their first home. The amount borrowed from your RRSP under the Home Buyers' Plan must be repaid to your RRSP over a 15-year period.

"Remember you are benefitting by using 'pre-tax dollars' toward the down payment," says Cynthia Caskey, vice president and portfolio manager at TD Wealth Private Investment Advice.

"Even more valuable is if you can combine your RRSP contribution with other savings to have a down payment of at least 20 per cent of the purchase price and avoid [paying for] mortgage insurance."

Out of cash? Consider this: If cash is tight, you can make in-kind contributions. Investors can choose to transfer stocks, bonds or mutual funds held in a non-registered investment account to their RRSP account as an in-kind contribution.

Remember, for tax purposes, your securities will be treated as disposed of and will be subject to capital gains tax. "Check your cost base on those assets — any gain will be taxable at the time of the transfer but a loss will not be deductible," cautions Caskey. "Think twice before transferring a security at a loss."

Unless the loss is very small, she adds, consider selling the security and contribute cash proceeds to your RRSP. If you do in-

tend to sell, Caskey has a word of advice: "If you or your spouse wish to purchase the same shares in a registered account, avoid doing this for a period of 30 days before or after the sale."

RRSP excess contributions: Many savers are unaware of the cumulative lifetime over-contribution limit of \$2000 allowed by the government without incurring a tax penalty. It is designed to create a cushion in case a mistake in calculating your contributions puts you offside with the RRSP rules.

While not deductible from your current year's income, over-contribution limit does provide a legitimate way to add extra funds to your RRSP where they

can grow on a tax-deferred basis.

"Over contributions may be deducted in a subsequent year when your actual RRSP contribution is less than the maximum allowed," says Caskey. "So if your cash flow is uneven, you may want to make the contribution while you have the cash in hand."

Spousal RRSP: Spousal RRSPs are a great way to reduce overall family taxes during retirement through income splitting as a couple. Caskey identifies situations in which a spousal RRSP has an important role to play in retirement planning:

1. Splitting income prior to age 65, if you do not have a registered pension plan (RPP).
2. Allocating more than 50 per

cent of your retirement income to your partner.

3. Doubling Home Buyers' Plan withdrawals. The federal government's plan allows couples to withdraw up to \$50,000 of their RRSP savings to use as a down payment on their first home.

The other advantage of a spousal plan is that it will not mature — even if the contributing partner is older than age 71 — until the other partner (known as the annuitant) turns 71 years of age. In other words, if the contributing spouse is older than age 71 and has earned income, he or she could contribute to the spousal RRSP and take advantage of the tax deduction so long as his or her partner is below the age of 71.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Give gifts that help your loved ones reach their dreams

Saving. It's that "thing" in the back of many of our minds that just never seems to get the focus it truly deserves.

When we're faced with unexpected expenses, student debt, housing debt, family expenses and enjoying life, the task of saving — of saving early — can be daunting.

In an economy where the resilience and ingenuity of Albertans continues to be put to test, one organization is encouraging us to think differently about the gifts we give to our loved ones this year.

"What if instead of 'things' we gave our loved ones a head start?"

Or a boost to savings? This is what we want to

encourage. Saving early and consistently are the best ways to build for the future. When you couple that with a smart investment, those savings can really start to add up over time," says Shelley Vandenberg, President of First Calgary Financial, a division of Connect First Credit Union. "Kick-starting savings for someone's dreams — whether that's an education, a holiday, a home or retirement — that's a gift that's impactful."

First Calgary Financial has launched a new series of gift certificates, available in a range of denominations to invest in someone's future.

They're the perfect, thoughtful gift for everything from Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Valentine's Day to birthdays, baby showers, and Weddings.

Better yet, for younger people, they help instill an early understanding of the importance of saving, while building financial literacy skills and savvy. Each gift certificate gives the recipient the chance to sit down with a the First Calgary team to look at their plans and how best to achieve them. It gives youth a head start towards their goals, whether that's a new home, a travel adventure or an entrepreneurial dream.

The gift certificates can be invested into a variety of deposit options, including an RESP, RSP, TFSA, or simply to boost one's personal savings. One of the options includes their Enhanced Growth term deposit, a great way to invest into the market without the risk.

The Calgary-based credit union aims to offer innovative, responsible and people-focused options; just as they do through their No Fees For Me chequing accounts and their member-owned profit-sharing approach to banking.

Find out more about this new way to give at FirstCalgary.com/Gift or visit one of their local branches.



"What if instead of 'things' we gave our loved ones a head start?"

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INNOVATION

Camp in style with more efficient, safer vehicles

Jason Menard

For many, RVing may bring back memories of long trips in cramped accommodations. But it's safe to say that the modern ride is not your father (or grandfather's) recreational vehicle — and you can have all the luxuries of home, even when you're going off the grid.

And as much as the vehicles themselves have changed, seemingly minor technological advances have had a huge impact, explained Keith Crone, a veteran sales consultant with 38 years in the industry, at Bucars RV Centre, located in Balzac, Alta.

"The impact of flat-screen TVs has been dramatic," he said. "Before, with a 32-inch TV, it needed to fit in a wall cutaway that was as wide as it was deep. Now you can hang them anywhere. Just one little innovation can make a big difference."

Mobile technology has also changed the way people interact with their vehicles. "Using

apps, you can control awnings, levelling jacks, slide outs — everything can be controlled from outside," Crone added.

The vehicles have become more fuel efficient and lighter over the years. "When I first got into the industry, on a gas-powered motor home, it was common to see 460, 440, 454 engines all with carbureted motors," he said. "Nowadays, the motor of choice is a Ford V10, the carburetor is gone. And they can run down highway speeds at diesel RPM [2,000 RPM] increasing fuel efficiency."

In many ways, vehicles can be self-sufficient. "With a bank of solar panels on the roof, batteries and an inverter, you can go off the grid," he said, adding that most vehicles now have residential fridges inside because the technology is so energy efficient and cost effective. In fact, several RVs are fully electric, with no propane on board.

"It's more efficient, safer, and convenient," he said. "People no longer need to go to a full-service campground. Instead, we're seeing more people going off the path — or boondocking."

Today's vehicles have better, more resistant technologies, are built with better materials (fibreglass instead of tin), and are better sealed. And there are a variety of choices based on



Minor technological advances, including flat-screen TVs, have had a huge impact on the RVing industry. ISTOCK

people's needs, towing vehicles and stages of life.

"We handle everything from lightweight family-oriented travel trailers to \$700,000 motorhomes. We cut a pretty wide swath," he said. "If you start a young family on a travel trailer,

by the time their kids move out, the parents may gravitate to a fifth wheel or a motor home.

"We're nurturing a relationship at a younger age. We were founded in 1959 and we're seeing the third generation of buyers."



People no longer need to go to a full-service campground. Instead, we're seeing more people going off path — or boondocking.

Keith Crone, Bucars RV Centre

Knowledge is key for first time buyers

Buying an RV for the first time can be a daunting prospect. For Keith Crone of Bucars RV Centre, a veteran sales consultant with 38 years in the industry, the key to a successful purchase is knowledge. And information is easier to get than ever.

"In this day and age when we have the Internet at our fingertips, I encourage buyers to research the dealers they're buying from with an emphasis on who they are buying from as much as what they're buying," he said. "Shop that dealer hard — ask about them at campgrounds, at work."

He advocates starting close to home and giving local dealers a chance.

"The biggest mistake first-time buyers make is that they'll go way out of the trading area to buy because they think they're saving money," he said. "It's nice to be able to get service close to home. The RV industry is not as evolved as the auto industry. You invest in a dealer and the dealer invests in you. If you go out of your area, that breaks down.



First-time buyers should start their shopping close to home. ISTOCK

"It's important to establish a relationship with a long-term dealer with service, parts, and the personnel to back it up."

Crone added that the useable shelf life of an RV is seven to 10 years. After that, maintenance costs start adding up, especially

for items such as refrigerators and stoves. He advocates new simply because while initial costs may be less with a used

vehicle, repairs and maintenance can quickly add up.

"I feel much better when I have first-time buyers in a new vehicle," Crone said. "Then they get more than just the dealer's support; there's also the manufacturer's support."

"If a customer takes their time and properly selects a new RV, they will hold that for a longer period of time."

And new buyers will also want to make sure they're protected on the road. Crone explained that Bucars is part of an organization that's committed to helping drivers, whether they're at home or thousands of kilometres away.

"We're founding members of RV Care — a group of 160 members across North America [60 in Canada; 100 in the U.S.] that have signed on to help each other's customers in transit," he said.

Bucars also offers a number of blog posts and videos to help new buyers find their way to the right vehicle at bucarsrv.com.

JASON MENARD

TRAVEL

A guide to RVing in Alberta

Whether you want to stay close to home or travel further afield, Alberta offers prime RVing opportunities.

"I tend to gravitate to southern travel, where it's warm," explained Crone. "But in Alberta we have some tremendous RVing inside of a three-hour drive of Calgary."

RVers can easily access Banff National Park, Kananaskis Country and Drumheller, he added.

"The Province of Alberta has a unique niche in the RV world," Crone said. "At one time, there was a statistic that showed that Albertans owned more RVs per capita than any other region."

For more information on places to RV in Alberta, visit:

- Visitcalgary.com
- Travelalberta.com
- Rvalberta.ca

JASON MENARD



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"It's still like a World Series tour. We've got to turn the page": Chicago Cubs third baseman Kris Bryant

Sanchez's role no longer in doubt with Blue Jays

MLB

Pitcher not bogged down by job security, innings limit

Aaron Sanchez came into spring training this year with a different mentality than in the past.

For the first time in his major-league career, the 24-year-old right-hander doesn't have to prove he's worthy of a spot in the Blue Jays' starting rotation after his dominant season last year. He's using that lack of pressure to sharpen his arsenal.

"The last few years I've come in having to compete for a spot," Sanchez said Wednesday after his first official workout of the spring. "This year I have the luxury of (getting) to work on things. I feel like I made tremendous strides with my curveball last season and even in the off-season so my focus this year is on the change-up."

Sanchez threw his change-up just 270 times in 2016 — or nine per cent of the time — striking out 10 batters with it, but also giving up seven hits including a home run.



THE CANADIAN PRESS

3.00

Sanchez's AL-leading ERA last season.

"I don't want to get too caught up in it," he said. "Just enough to have that comfort with it to take it into the regular season."

Sanchez helped anchor Toronto's rotation last year, going 15-2 with an American League-best 3.00 earned-run average. And he did it while on an innings limit.

Wanting to protect their young pitcher's valuable arm, the organization debated sending Sanchez to the bullpen midway through the season. His performance in the rotation, however, made the decision more difficult.

In a compromise, Toronto opted to manage his innings by skipping a few of his starts.

Sanchez finished the regular season with 192 innings (plus 11-2/3 in



Aaron Sanchez warms up during his first official workout of the spring on Wednesday in Dunedin, Fla. RICK MADONIK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

the post-season), more than doubling his 2015 total (92-1/3) when he was used as a reliever

Our goal is to get one step further, really ... A little different look this year, no doubt about that, but it's still a good, solid team.

Blue Jays manager John Gibbons

for the second half of the year.

"I think last year I showed limitations shouldn't be an issue," Sanchez said. "I'll leave that up to management and how they feel but I'm ready to go. I put the work in and I'm excited to see how this year shakes out."

Blue Jays manager John Gibbons said he wasn't worried about Sanchez's innings this

season.

"Yeah, I don't see any limitations," Gibbons said. "He ended up throwing a full year last year. He's a big strong kid, he worked really hard this winter. We're going to monitor him here in spring training and back him off a little bit ... we'll keep an eye on that but he's good to go. No concerns."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA ALL-STAR GAME

Equality statement made in Big Easy

The city hosting this year's NBA All-Star Game has long enjoyed a reputation as a welcoming place for the gay and lesbian community. New Orleans is home to one of the country's oldest gay bars, the gay celebration Southern Decadence draws nearly 200,000 people yearly, and gay and lesbian authors flock there for the Saints and Sinners literary festival.

All of that acceptance will be on full display this weekend in a not-so-subtle statement about equality.

The city of Charlotte was supposed to host the game Sunday, but the NBA moved it to New Orleans when North Carolina passed "the bathroom bill," which limits protections for lesbian, gay and transgender people. It also requires transgender people to use many public restrooms corresponding with the sex on their birth certificate.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards touted the state's diversity while lobbying the NBA, saying bringing the game to New Orleans would reaffirm the league's "commitment to communities that value fairness and inclusion."

Just last year, Edwards signed an executive order barring discrimination against LGBTQ state workers and contractors.

The NBA has stated the issue of LGBTQ inclusion played a role in moving the game to New Orleans as did the city's ability to work under a tight deadline on big events. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UFC

Lesnar retires from mixed martial arts

Former UFC heavyweight champion Brock Lesnar has informed the mixed martial arts promotion that he is retired from competition.

The UFC confirmed the former heavyweight champion's decision Wednesday.

Lesnar, 39, returned from a 4.5-year MMA absence last July to beat Mark Hunt at UFC 200, but the result was overturned after Lesnar failed two doping tests. He was subsequently suspended from competition for



Brock Lesnar GETTY IMAGES

a year by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, which administers the UFC's doping policy.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Riders add playmaker Owens to arsenal

The Flyin' Hawaiian is heading to Riderville.

The Saskatchewan Roughriders signed American receiver/returner Chad Owens to a two-year contract Wednesday, the second day of CFL free agency. It's the second new team in as many seasons for the 34-year-old Honolulu native, who played last year for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats following a six-year stint with the Toronto Argonauts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFL

Stampeders sign linebacker Landry

The Calgary Stampeders signed free-agent Canadian linebacker Beau Landry on Wednesday.

Landry joins the Stampeders after three seasons with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. The 2014 first-round pick had 28 special-teams tackles, one tackle and two forced fumbles in 36 regular-season games.

Landry, a native of Kitchener, Ont., was limited to just six games last season due to a concussion. But he appeared in three post-season contests and

Hamilton's 2014 Grey Cup loss to Calgary.

"Beau is a young man we really liked coming out of college," Calgary GM/president John Hufnagel said in a statement. "His 2016 season was injury-shortened but he was a very good special-teams contributor during his time with the Ticats and I'm looking forward to seeing him come into camp with us and compete for a job not only on special teams but also on defence." THE CANADIAN PRESS



Workers prepare for the NBA All-Star Game festivities outside Smoothie King Center in New Orleans on Tuesday.

GERALD HERBERT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Arsenal staring at exit door after Bayern rout

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Thiago double helps Munich put one foot in quarter-finals

Bayern Munich answered its critics with a comprehensive 5-1 rout of Arsenal in the first leg of their Champions League clash to put one foot in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

Thiago Alcantara struck twice in a superb performance, while Arjen Robben, Robert Lewandowski and substitute Thomas Muller scored the other goals. Arsenal now faces what seems a near-impossible task in the second leg of the Round of 16

+ IN MADRID

Real come from behind to earn first-leg advantage

Defending champion Real Madrid recovered after conceding early on to beat Napoli 3-1 on Wednesday and stay on track to defend its title.

Karim Benzema, Toni

Kroos and Casemiro all scored for Madrid after Lorenzo Insigne's extraordinary long-range goal for Napoli less than 10 minutes into the Round of 16 first-leg match at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

half-hour mark. Amid deafening whistles from the home fans, Manuel Neuer saved Sanchez's weak spot kick and Sanchez then missed the rebound but the Chilean cut the Bayern fans' cheers short when he prodded in the third attempt.

But it was all Bayern for the second half as Lewandowski rose above two defenders to head into a 2-1 lead on 53 minutes. The Poland striker produced a brilliant back-heeled flick to send Thiago through to score another three minutes later. Thiago grabbed his second a few minutes later, with a deflected shot after a corner, before Muller completed the rout two minutes after he came on in the 86th.

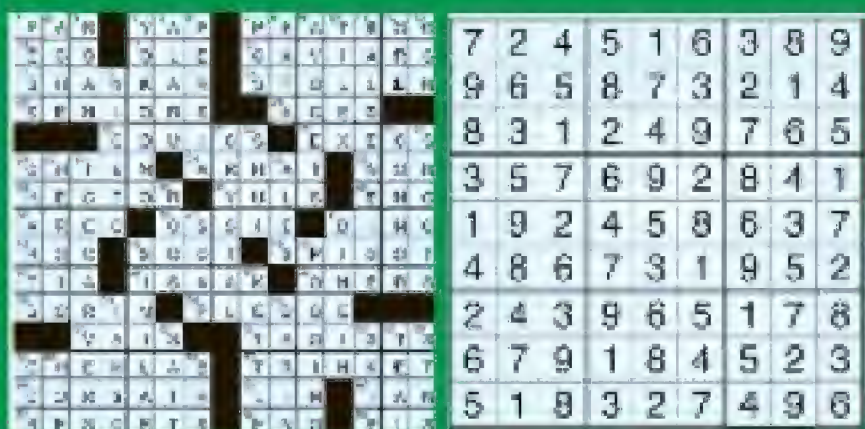
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Robert Lewandowski heads in Bayern's second goal in its Champions League first-leg match against Arsenal on Wednesday in Munich. ALEX GRIMM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

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GOLF

Henderson to build on promising first season

Brooke Henderson expects her hard work in 2016 is going to pay off in the new LPGA season.

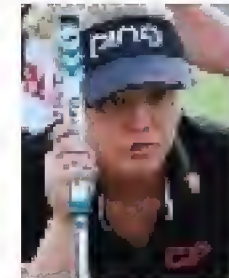
Henderson tees off at the Women's Australian Open on Wednesday, looking to build on her first full season as a professional where she reached as high as No. 2 in the world rankings. She was one of the busiest players on the LPGA Tour last year and although it was exhausting, Henderson believes it will pay off in the long run.

"I think it was really important because I got to know what

the courses were like, what the fans were like in that area," Henderson said Tuesday.

"I got to get a feel for the hotels, the golf courses, what travelling to that place was like, the time changes. I learned a lot of information about every place that I went, and so this year I can be a little bit more careful and kind of conserve my energy a little bit better and just go to the places that I want to go to."

The 19-year-old from Smiths Falls, Ont., finished in a tie for 21st place at the LPGA Classic



Brooke Henderson
GETTY IMAGES

last month. She showed moments of brilliance at that event, including an 8-under 65 in the second round, but also had an underwhelming 73 the next day.

She'll be joined at the Australian Open by three other Canadians: Hamilton's Alena Sharp, Maude-Aimee Leblanc of

Sherbrooke, Que., and Calgary's Jennifer Ha. Henderson, who finished last season in the No. 8 position, is hopeful her world ranking will rise over the coming months.

"I think everybody on the LPGA Tour, their goal is to be the No. 1 player in the world," said Henderson. "(World No. 1) Lydia Ko has done an incredible job. But being in that No. 2 position last summer was really exciting. I think by the end of 2017 (I'll) definitely be in the top five." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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PHOTO: MAYA VISNIVE

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

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Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30
Serves 4

Ingredients

- 6 large boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- olive oil
- salt and pepper
- 3/4 pound mini red, white and purple potatoes, halved or quartered if large
- 6-8 cherry tomatoes
- 1/4 cup bocconcini
- 8-10 basil leaves, roughly chopped

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400.
2. Rub the chicken thighs on both sides with olive oil and then generously season with salt and pepper.
3. Heat large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken, cover and cook until it browns on one side, about 3 minutes. Turn the chicken; add the potatoes. Allow the chicken to cook another 3 minutes to brown then add the cherry tomatoes; transfer to oven and roast, uncovered, until chicken and potatoes are cooked, about 20 minutes.
4. Remove skillet from pan and toss in cheese and garnish with basil.

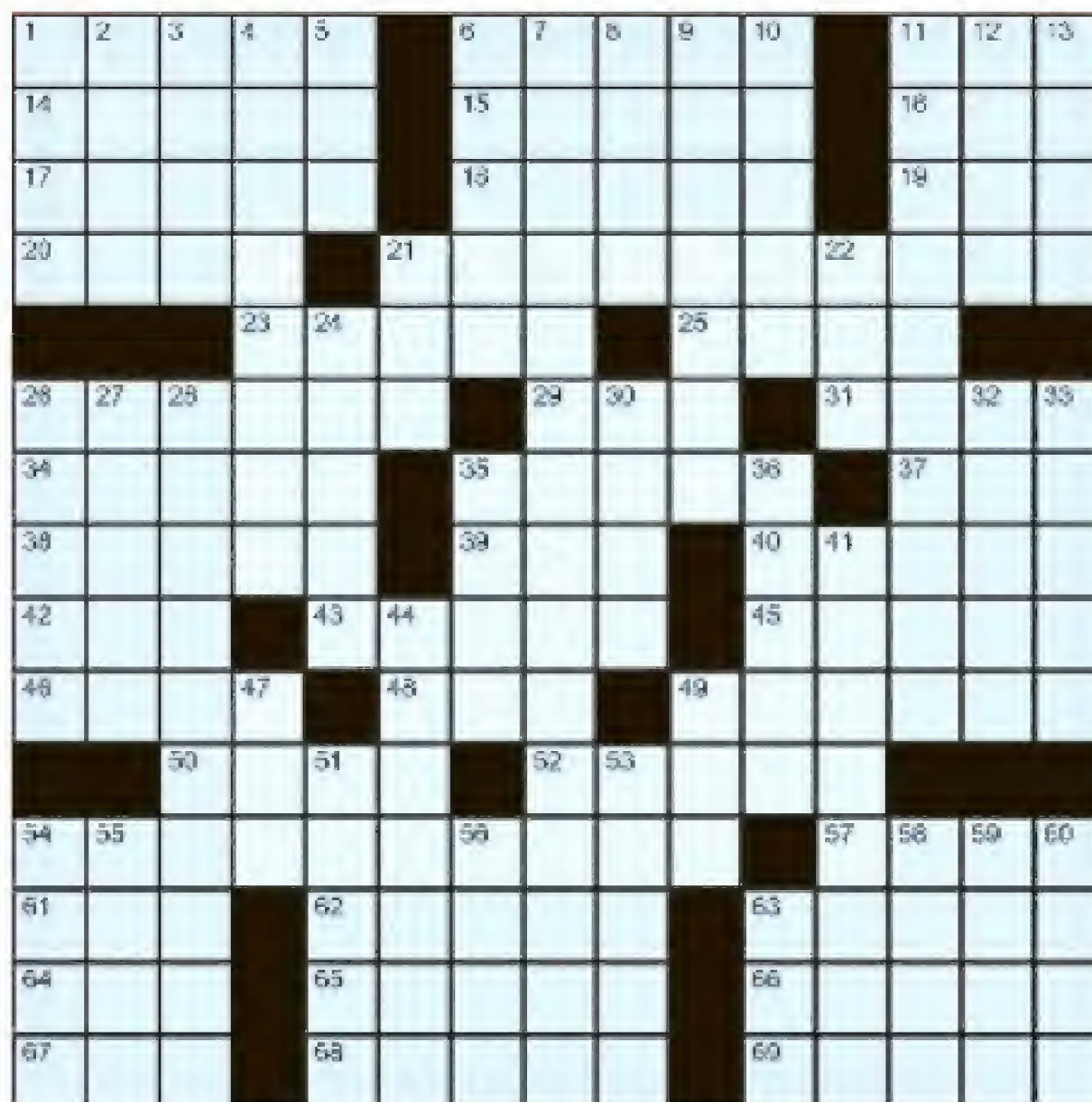
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ACROSS

1. Movie
6. "The table ___" (Helpful dinner-time comment)
11. Tree's fluid
14. Pliant/agile
15. Put ___ (Get working)
16. Make the score even
17. "___ Which Way But Loose" (1978)
18. West: French
19. Pro golfer Ernie
20. Half, in Hull
21. Most like bread's famous spread
23. Strip of mown lawn
25. Table salt, chemistry-style
26. Indifference
29. The Beeb
31. Mr. Kristoferson
34. "The Godfather" (1972) syndicate
35. Herd-heralded
37. Rascalion
38. More likely to
39. Not in fashion
40. Adversary
42. Mystery novelist Ms. Grafton
43. People from Helsinki's country
45. ___-3 fatty acid
46. Baby Atlantic Herring, for short
48. "Sure" sign
49. Nova Scotia's provincial bird
50. Big bathing basins
52. Trunk
54. Daytime TV



- dramas: 2 wds.
57. Young sheep
61. Sneeze starters...
62. ___ Manner (1861 novel)
63. Jewel
64. Meet for a meeting
65. Elliptical path

66. Etruria's environs
67. Horticulturist's implement
68. Financial resources
69. Fathers: French

DOWN

1. Escaped
2. 1995: "Lightning Crashes" band
3. Detail
4. Modelling legend Ms. Brinkley
5. Important
6. "We Can Work ___" by The

- Beatles
7. 1971 song by #11-Down: 2 wds.
8. Tallow source
9. Gist
10. Bright pet fish
11. Canadian band with the hit "Ten Pound Note", as well as #7-Down:

- 2 wds.
12. Is feeling poorly
13. Nuisance
21. James or Hudson
22. "Eeew!"
24. Dock
26. Stockpile
27. ___ New Guinea
28. Leftover flavour
30. C-3PO, et al.
32. Effigy
33. Flare
35. Uni
36. Smelter's waste
41. Discourteous
44. Motivate in a way
47. Clone or copy, curtly
49. Alternative words
51. Tom Hanks sitcom, "___ Bud-dies"
53. Brewery kilns
54. Belt alternative
55. 2004: "___ Is for Lovers" by Hawthorne Heights
56. British actor Idris
58. Slightly open
59. Sort of spy
60. Purchases
63. Marcel Marceau's clown

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Talk to groups or classes today, especially with younger people. This also is a good day to do some goal setting for the future.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You are mentally energetic today, which is why you will make a good impression talking to bosses, parents and VIPs. Don't hesitate to share your ideas.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
It is easy to study today or learn anything new. You also will love to make travel plans and have discussions about philosophy, religion, politics and metaphysics.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
This is a good day to discuss shared property, inheritances, taxes and debt. You have the mental energy to plow through a lot of red-tape details.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Discussions with partners and close friends will be lively and dynamic today. Everyone is full of bright ideas, and of course, you are quick to see the bottom line and grasp the big picture.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This will be a productive day at work because you can communicate well with others. In addition, you have the energy to work with your hands and accomplish something.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You are creative today. Get busy working in the arts, the entertainment world, the hospitality industry or anything to do with sports or children.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is an excellent day to tackle home repairs. It's also a great day for family discussions, because you have a desire to communicate.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Writers, salespeople, actors and teachers are empowered today. You are keen to communicate and you have great ideas. This is because your mental energy is strong.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You're full of moneymaking ideas today. It's a good idea to write them down in case you want to act on one of them later. (It's not every day that we have bright ideas.)

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Mercury is in your sign now, which is why you are so keen to communicate to others. You have ideas and dreams, and you want to enlighten others by sharing these ideas.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Research of any kind will go well today, because you have the motivation, stamina and the attention to detail that is needed.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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